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Language and Legend in the Fantasy Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien

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I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Dan Wiley, for his support and advice on this project.

Recommended Citation

Cornwell, Melissa K., "Language and Legend in the Fantasy Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien" (2011). *Honors Theses*. Paper 342.

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J.R.R. Tolkien's series, *The Lord of the Rings*, had a great impact on the literary world. Tolkien himself made quite an impact on English society as a philologist and teacher, and he wrote his novels because of his passion for language and mythology. *The Lord of the Rings* series included the books *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*, and he wrote *The Silmarillion* after completing the series as a sort of prequel to the events in the other books. Tolkien's life was profoundly affected by language and literature, and he brought what he knew about the mechanics of languages to his great works. The breadth of the world that Tolkien created was so enormous that his son, Christopher Tolkien, continued to publish his notes and other stories after Tolkien died. This world has been the source of material for critics for decades after the books were published. The characters and the plot are well-known subjects of study, but the literary aspect of Tolkien's books has captured even more interest. Although the books are classified as fantasy, their potential in their literary qualities cannot be ignored.

Tolkien set out to build a complete mythology from his imagination and accomplished that in his novels. The mythology and language of the novels became intense areas of study as critics began to realize the potential in Tolkien's works. There was something so real in the languages that he created, and critics wanted to find the inspirations behind Tolkien's worlds. Elves, dwarves, men, hobbits, and various other creatures occupied the pages of his books, but the languages he created were complex and had real elements in them. Examples of his invented languages were those spoken by the Elves, Sindarin and Quenya. These languages involve complex uses of phonology, morphology, and syntax, and Tolkien gives various pieces of these languages throughout the books in poems and songs. It is in these invented languages that Tolkien's life work showed the greatest influence. "Tolkien's ruling passion was philology"

(Shippey xi). Tolkien studied languages and mythologies for a living, and he used the knowledge from these languages to build the Elven dialects. Real, actual languages, such as English and Welsh, greatly influenced the structure of the created languages in *The Lord of the Rings* series and in *The Silmarillion*. However, for Tolkien, the language could not exist without the legend, and so this paper will look at not only the influence of those languages in his invented languages, but also at many different aspects of Tolkien's life that influenced the creation of his most famous works.

J.R.R. Tolkien grew up in a tumultuous period of time in England's history. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892, in Bloemfontein, to Arthur and Mabel Tolkien (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 20). Although his first name was John, his family decided to call him by his second name Ronald. "'Reuel' was Arthur's own second name, but there was no family precedent for 'Ronald'. This was the name by which Arthur and Mabel came to address their son, the name that would be used by his relatives and later by his wife. Yet he sometimes said that he did not feel it to be his real name; indeed people seemed to feel faintly uncomfortable when choosing how to address him" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 20-21). Arthur had traveled to South Africa for his career, and Mabel left England to meet him there and marry him, much to the disapproval of her family. Arthur was descended from German immigrants that had been in England for only a few generations, and Mabel's father felt that Arthur was not good enough for his daughter (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 18). Mabel and Arthur had met when she was eighteen, and he had no fortune because his family was bankrupt. Arthur was offered a job in South Africa in the Orange Free State as a bank manager, and he was given a home and an income (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 18). After she

turned twenty-one, Mabel left England to travel to South Africa, where she and Arthur were married.

Besides Ronald, they had another son on February 17, 1894, whom they named Hilary Arthur Reuel Tolkien (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 22). Although Hilary was a healthy boy that did well in the South African heat, Ronald did not, and his health steadily got worse. “Hilary proved to be a healthy child who flourished in the Bloemfontein climate, but his elder brother was not doing so well. Ronald was sturdy and handsome, with his fair hair and blue eyes—‘quite a young Saxon’, his father called him” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 22). Ronald could not tolerate the heat of South Africa, and to get him to a cooler climate Mabel traveled to England with both boys while Arthur stayed behind for his job. “So he decided to stay in Bloemfontein for the time being and to join his wife and children in England a little later. Ronald watched his father painting A.R. Tolkien on the lid of a family trunk. It was the only clear memory of him that the boy retained” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 23). The trip was intended to be just a visit with plans to return once Ronald’s health had improved. While they were away, Arthur Tolkien was struck ill with a rheumatic fever, and he was not able to make the journey back to England do to his continuing ill health. On February 14, 1896, he suffered a severe hemorrhage, and he passed away the next day (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 24). He was buried in South Africa before his family even knew of his death.

Mabel Tolkien knew that she would have to find some kind of income to provide for her sons and herself, and their little family stayed with her parents in Birmingham until she could find a home in the country that would be affordable. As such, Ronald spent more time with his mother’s side of the family than his father’s:

“The Tolkiens always liked to tell stories that gave a romantic colouring to their origins; but whatever the truth of those stories the family was at the time of Ronald’s childhood entirely English in character and appearance, indistinguishable from thousands of other middle-class tradespeople who populated the Birmingham suburbs. In any case Ronald was more interested in his mother’s family. He soon developed a strong affection for the Suffields and for what they represented” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 27).

The Suffields were a modest family that came from a small town called Evesham, and they were proud of their origins. “Being in a sense a homeless child—for his journey from South Africa and the wanderings that now began gave him a sense of rootlessness - he held on to this concept of Evesham in particular and the whole West Midland area in general as being his true home” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 27). Ronald felt somewhat aloof from England, having been born in South Africa, and he clung to the idea of a rooted family identity, one in which he included himself.

As a child, there were many things that influenced Ronald, and he found the most influence in the English countryside. “By the summer of 1896 Mabel Tolkien had found somewhere cheap enough for herself and the children to live independently, and they moved out of Birmingham to the hamlet of Sarehole, a mile or so beyond the southern edge of the city. The effect of this move on Ronald was deep and permanent. Just at the age when his imagination was opening out, he found himself in the English countryside” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 27). His mother began to home-school him and his brother in the hopes that they would be prepared to enter King Edward’s school, “which their father had attended and which was the best grammar school in the city” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 25). Mabel

disciplined her sons as best as she could, and educated them in Latin, French, and English, as well as the piano.

Ronald was able to read and write by the time he turned four years old, and although he didn't show much of an interest in music, he loved learning about the Latin and English languages:

His favourite lessons were those that concerned languages. Early in his Sarehole days his mother introduced him to the rudiments of Latin, and this delighted him. He was just as interested in the sounds and shapes of the words as in their meanings, and she began to realize that he had a special aptitude for language. She began to teach him French. He liked this much less, not for any particular reason; but the sounds did not please him as much as the sounds of Latin and English. She also tried to interest him in the piano, but without success. It seemed rather as if words took the place of music for him, and that he enjoyed listening to them, reading them, and reciting them, almost regardless of what they meant.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 29-30)

In addition to languages, the amount of reading that Ronald did began to influence his imagination in other ways. He read many different classics, but his favorite was a book of fairy tales, and his particularly favorite subject was dragons. Immersed in these fantastical elements, Ronald wrote his first piece on dragons. "He was not merely content to read about dragons. When he was about seven he began to compose his own story about a dragon" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 30). Time passed quietly at their little home in Sarehole, but Ronald could sense that their situation would not always remain so peaceful. "Through the daily worries of the family's poverty-stricken existence there shone his love for his mother and for the Sarehole

countryside, a place for adventure and solace. He reveled in his surroundings with a desperate enjoyment, perhaps sensing that one day this paradise would be lost” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 31). For a long period of time, the Tolkien family would experience greater hardships.

Mabel looked to Christianity for help and comfort, especially after her husband’s death. The family attended the Anglican Church, which they walked to every Sunday. Mabel did not want to stay with the Anglican Church though, and along with her sister May, she switched her faith to the Roman Catholic Church:

Mabel had been thinking for some time about becoming a Catholic. Nor did she take this step alone. Her sister May Incledon had returned from South Africa, now with two children, leaving her husband Walter to follow when he had completed his business. Unknown to him she too had decided to become a Catholic. During the spring of 1900 May and Mabel received instruction at St. Anne’s, and in June of the same year they were received into the Church of Rome.(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 31)

Their decision to change churches enraged the entire family, who were all members of different denominations of Protestant churches. Some of her Mabel’s family members even withdrew their financial support for her and the boys. Although the conflict added more stress to her life, Mabel refused to withdraw from the Catholic Church:

Mabel would have to face hostility from Walter and from other members of her family, not to mention the Tolkiens, many of whom were Baptists and strongly opposed to Catholicism. The strain that this induced, coupled with the additional financial hardship, did no good to her health; but nothing would shake her loyalty

to her new faith, and against all opposition she began to instruct Ronald and Hilary in the Catholic religion.(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 32)

This decision by Mabel influenced Ronald greatly, and he would remain a devout Catholic all his life.

Ronald took the examination for King Edward's, and he passed the second time, entering the school in September 1900 (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 32). The school was four miles from his house, and because Mabel could not afford the train, he had to walk it every day. Mabel decided that they should move closer to the school, and after four years in the country, they moved to a small house in the city. Soon after moving, the house was to be demolished, and so they eventually ended up in a villa behind the King's Heath train station (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 32-33). Although Ronald missed the Sarehole house, he found a new source of entertainment in the trains that passed behind his house:

The King's Heath house backed on to a railway line, and life was punctuated by the roar of trains and the shunting of trucks in the nearby coal-yard. Yet the railway cutting had grass slopes, and here [Ronald] discovered flowers and plants. And something else attracted his attention: the curious names on the coal-trucks in the sidings below, odd names which he did not know how to pronounce but which had a strange appeal to him. So it came about that by pondering over *Nantyglo*, *Senghenydd*, *Blaen-Rhondda*, *Penrhiwceiber*, and *Tredegar*, he discovered the existence of the Welsh language" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 33-34).

Ronald had found another language, one that he would grow to love as he got older.

Mabel had moved to the King Heath's house not only for the location in the city, but also for the Catholic Church down the street. As time passed though, Mabel became dissatisfied with both the house and the church. "She discovered the Birmingham Oratory, a large church in the suburb of Edgbaston that was looked after by a community of priests... What was more, attached to the Oratory and under the direction of its clergy was the Grammar School of St. Philip, where the fees were lower than King Edward's and where her sons could receive a Catholic education" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 34). Soon after the Tolkiens started attending the church, a new priest was established in the church named Father Francis Morgan. He would become "an indispensable part of the Tolkien household" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 35). The Tolkiens moved to a different house closer to Birmingham Oratory, described as "a house that was only one degree better than a slum" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 35). The house was not their only problem. St Philip's, although in an ideal location and not as expensive, did not provide as much in the academic areas as King Edward's. Ronald soon excelled beyond the level that St. Philip's could offer. "Soon Ronald had outpaced his classmates, and Mabel realized that St. Philip's could not provide the education that he needed. So she removed him, and once again undertook his tuition herself: with much success, for some months later he won a Foundation Scholarship to King Edward's and returned there in the autumn of 1903" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 35).

Ronald would stay at King Edward's for the remainder of his education, which went to 12th grade. He learned Greek in sixth grade, and his professors also introduced him to Middle English, which immediately captured his interest. "He [the professor] encouraged his pupils to read Chaucer, and he recited the *Canterbury Tales* to them in the original Middle English. To Ronald Tolkien's ears this was a revelation, and he determined to learn more about the history of

the language” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 35). However, Mabel Tolkien’s physical health became steadily worse. When the boys were sick in the middle of the winter of that year, Mabel would nurse them, but the effort placed her in the hospital. She was diagnosed with diabetes. The boys were placed in different homes with different family members until their mother recovered after several months in the hospital. The boys rejoined their mother in the summer of 1904: “Late in June 1904, the boys rejoined their mother and they all went to Rednal for the summer” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 37). When the school term started again, Ronald would walk the mile to King Edward’s because Mabel did not want to leave the little cottage to return to the city. However, Mabel’s health began to get worse again. She did not tell her sons, and by November, there was no hope of her regaining her strength. “Unnoticed by her sons, Mabel’s condition began to deteriorate again. At the beginning of November she collapsed in a way that seemed to them sudden and terrifying. She sank into a diabetic coma, and six days later, on 14 November, with Father Francis and her sister May Incledon at her bedside in the cottage, she died” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 38).

Mabel’s death had no small impact on Ronald and the way he lived his life after she died. He developed a stronger connection to his faith and the church, and he decided to definitely pursue his interest in languages:

It might be said that after she died his religion took the place in his affections that she had previously occupied. The consolation that it provided was emotional as well as spiritual. Perhaps her death also had a cementing effect on his study of languages. It was she, after all, who had been his first teacher and who had encouraged him to take an interest in words. Now that she was gone he would pursue that path relentlessly. And certainly the loss of his mother had a profound

effect on his personality. It made him into a pessimist. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 39)

Mabel made sure that her sons would be well provided after she died, and chose Father Francis Morgan to be their guardian. “Mabel Tolkien was buried in the Catholic churchyard at Bromsgrove. Over her grave Father Francis Morgan placed a stone cross of the same design as that used for each of the Oratory clergy in their Rednal cemetery. In her will Mabel had appointed him to be guardian of her two sons, and it proved a wise choice, for he displayed unfailing generosity and affection to them” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 40). Most of Mabel’s family members were of different Protestant faiths, and Father Francis was wary of placing the boys with them, fearful that their family might try to persuade them to leave the Catholic Church. However, there was one aunt who had no religious affiliation, and Father Francis decided that she would be the best choice. “There was however one relative, an aunt by marriage, who had no particular religious views and had a room to let. She lived in Birmingham near the Oratory, and Father Francis decided that her house would be as good a home as any for the moment. So a few weeks after their mother’s death Ronald and Hilary (now aged thirteen and eleven) moved into their aunt’s top-floor bedroom. Her name was Beatrice Suffield” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 40). Their aunt was a widow, and had never had any children. She could not empathize with the boys and did not comfort them.

Ronald suffered from his mother’s death, and the separation from the countryside only deepened his grief; he could not stand to live in the city.

Ronald, still numb from the shock of his mother’s death, hated the view of almost unbroken rooftops with the factory chimneys beyond. The green countryside was just visible in the distance, but it now belonged to a remote past that could not be

regained. He was trapped in the city. His mother's death had severed him from the open air, from Lickey Hill where he had gathered bilberries, and from the Rednal cottage where they had been so happy. And because it was the loss of his mother that had taken him away from all these things, he came to associate them with her. His feelings toward the rural landscape, already sharp from the earlier severance that had taken him from Sarehole, now became emotionally charged with personal bereavement. This love for the memory of the countryside of his youth was later to become a central part of his writing, and it was intimately bound up with his love for the memory of his mother. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 40)

Since their aunt was so distant from them, Ronald and Hilary found comfort in the Oratory, with Father Francis. They would always eat breakfast with him before going to school.

The importance of Ronald's childhood was that it was as a child and a teenager that he began to explore his love of languages. He continued to excel in school, moving up class by class. The high academic standard of King Edward's gave him the resources he needed to learn about as many languages as he desired. "Clearly Ronald Tolkien had an aptitude for languages—his mother had seen that – and King Edward's provided the ideal environment in which this aptitude could flourish. The study of Latin and Greek were the backbone of the curriculum, and both languages were taught particularly well in the First (or senior) Class, which Ronald reached shortly before his sixteenth birthday" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 41). Ronald's professor was the headmaster, Robert Cary Gilson, who encouraged his students to study linguistics:

Gilson encouraged his pupils to make a detailed study of classical linguistics. This was entirely in keeping with Tolkien's inclinations; and, partly as a result of

Gilson's teaching, he began to develop an interest in the general principles of language. It was one thing to know Latin, Greek, French, and German; it was another to understand why they were what they were. Tolkien had started to look for the bones, the elements that were common to them all: he had begun, in fact, to study philology, the science of words. And he was encouraged to do this even more when he made his acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 42)

George Brewerton was the professor who had introduced Middle English to Ronald through Chaucer, and when Ronald showed an eager interest in language, Brewerton decided to introduce him to Anglo-Saxon. "Under his tuition [Professor Brewerton's] Ronald Tolkien had shown an interest in Chaucerian English. Brewerton was pleased by this and offered to lend the boy an Anglo-Saxon primer. The offer was eagerly accepted" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 42). This primer is where Ronald Tolkien's studies truly started, and where he encountered the language that he would later make his life study. His interests, of course, began to go beyond just the primer to actual texts in Old English, such as *Beowulf*. Both Middle and Old English appealed to Ronald because of their historical connection to the modern English that he spoke:

Opening its covers, Tolkien found himself face to face with the language that was spoken by the English before the first Normans set foot in their land. Anglo-Saxon, also called Old English, was familiar and recognizable to him as an antecedent of his own language, and at the same time was remote and obscure. The primer explained the language clearly in terms that he could easily understand, and he was soon making light work of translating the prose examples

at the back of the book. He found that Old English appealed to him, though it did not have the aesthetic charm of Welsh. This was rather a historical appeal, the attraction of studying the ancestor of his own language. And he began to find real excitement when he progressed beyond the simple passages in the primer and turned to the great Old English poem *Beowulf*. Reading this first in a translation and then in the original language, he found it to be one of the most extraordinary poems of all time” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 42).

Of course, after reading *Beowulf*, Ronald could not be satisfied.

Although he had read Chaucer’s work in Middle English, he decided to read another tale, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The poem appealed to his imagination, and the medieval knight was just like ones in the Arthurian legends. He then turned to studying a little Old Norse, and turned to a text that he was familiar with since he was a child:

Tolkien turned back to Middle English and discovered *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Here was another poem to fire his imagination: the medieval tale of an Arthurian knight and his search for the mysterious giant who is to deal him a terrible axe-blow. Tolkien was delighted by the poem and also by its language, for he realized that its dialect was approximately that which had been spoken by his mother’s West Midland ancestors. He began to explore further in Middle English, and read the *Pearl*, an allegorical poem about a dead child which is believed to have been written by the author of *Sir Gawain*. Then he turned to a different language and took a few hesitant steps in Old Norse, reading line by line in the original words the story of Sigurd and the dragon Fafnir that had fascinated him in Andrew Lang’s *Red Fairy Book* when he was a small child. By this time he had

acquired a range of linguistic knowledge that was remarkable in a schoolboy.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 43)

It was during the searches for linguistic studies that Tolkien found his true passion for languages. The connections between languages astonished him, and he loved the complexity of different languages and how they worked. He made sure to make good use of his time at King Edward's and the resources provided for him:

He continued his search for the 'bones' behind all these languages, rummaging in the school library and exploring the remoter shelves of Cornish's bookshop down the road. Eventually he began to find – and to scrape together enough money to buy – German books on philology that were 'dry-as-dust' but which could provide him with the answers to his questions. Philology: 'the love of words'. For that was what motivated him. It was not an arid interest in the scientific principles of language; it was a deep love for the look and sound of words, springing from the days when his mother had given him his first Latin lessons. As a result of this love of words, he had started to invent his own languages. (Carpenter, J.R.R.

Tolkien: A Biography 43)

As he grew older and neared the end of his high school career, language was not the only thing that Tolkien grew to love. Father Francis had continued to look after the boys all the time after their mother's death, and since they were getting older, he knew that they did not like living in their Aunt Beatrice's house, for it was not very hospitable. He decided that they should be moved to a more suitable place, and he chose the house of Mrs. Faulkner, who lived behind the Oratory on Duchess Road. It was there that Ronald met Edith Bratt, one of the other occupants of Mrs. Faulkner's house. "She was remarkably pretty, small and slim, with grey eyes, firm clear

features and short dark hair. The boys learnt that she too was an orphan, her mother having died five years previously and her father some time before that” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 46). Edith loved playing the piano, but she was not allowed to practice as much because of Mrs. Faulkner and she spent a lot of time alone in her room. When the Tolkien boys came to live with Mrs. Faulkner, Edith was happy because she was no longer alone.

They formed a friendship with her that helped all of them deal with the grief in their lives:

Then the Tolkien brothers arrived in the house. She found them very pleasant. In particular she liked Ronald, with his serious face and perfect manners; while Ronald, though he was acquainted with few girls of his age, discovered that familiarity soon conquered any nervousness on his part. He and Edith struck up a friendship. True, he was sixteen and she was nineteen. But he was old for his age and she looked young for hers, and she was neat and small and exceptionally pretty. Certainly she did not share his interest in languages, and she had received only a rather limited education. But her manner was very engaging. They became allies against ‘the Old Lady’, as they called Mrs. Faulkner. Edith would persuade Annie the maid to smuggle tidbits of food from the kitchen to the hungry boys on the second floor, and when the Old Lady was out, the boys would go to Edith’s room for secret feasts. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 47)

Through this friendship, Ronald and Edith did not worry about loneliness, and as they spent more and more time together, their friendship gradually changed into romance. “With two people of their personalities and in their position, romance was bound to flourish. Both were orphans in need of affection, and they found that they could give it to each other. During the

summer of 1909 they decided that they were in love” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 48). For the first time in his life, Ronald had found romance and love for a woman besides his mother, and their love was very real for both of them.

Around the time he met Edith, Ronald was working on getting a scholarship to Oxford. With his attention centered on Edith though, the amount of time he spent on his studies began to decrease. He was also trying to devote time to his passion for languages, and both of these activities consumed the time he would otherwise be studying. After one outing with Edith in which they were not chaperoned, there was a great deal of gossip that reached the ears of Father Francis Morgan. “Ronald’s guardian had been as a father to him, and his feelings can be imagined when he learnt that the ward on whom he had lavished so much affection, care, and money, was not concentrating his abilities on vital school-work but was (as quickly became apparent upon investigation) conducting a clandestine love affair with a girl three years his senior who was living in the same house. Father Francis summoned Ronald to the Oratory, told him that he was deeply shaken, and demanded that the affair should stop. Then he made arrangements for Ronald and Hilary to move to new lodgings, so as to get Ronald away from the girl” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 49). Out of respect and love for his guardian, Ronald agreed to do as Father Francis said.

In the midst of this trouble with Edith and Father Francis, he went to take the exam for the Oxford scholarship: “Oxford was new to him in every way, for his ancestors had never been university people. Here now was his chance to win honor for the Tolkiens and the Suffields, to repay Father Francis’s affection and generosity, and to prove that his love for Edith had not distracted him from his work. But it was not so easy” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 49-50). He failed his first attempt at the scholarship exam, but he would be able to try again for it

in a year: “In truth his failure was neither surprising nor disastrous. Competition for Oxford scholarships was always extremely severe, and this had been only his first attempt. He could try again next December, although by that time he would be nearly nineteen, and if he failed once more to win an award there would be no chance of his going to Oxford, for a commoner’s fees would be beyond his guardian’s pocket. Clearly he must work much harder” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 50). Although Edith and Ronald were not allowed to have a love affair, they tried to meet each other in secret whenever possible. Edith had decided that she would move to Cheltenham with an elderly couple, which would provide a respite from the gossip that surrounded their relationship. Yet, they were still seen during this meeting and the news got back to Father Francis, who became much more furious. “Father Francis made his attitude quite clear: Ronald must not meet or even write to Edith. He could only see her once more, to say good-bye on the day she left for Cheltenham. After that they must not communicate again until he was twenty-one, when his guardian would no longer be responsible for him. This meant a wait of three years” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 50-51).

After Edith left, Ronald’s life became completely about school, and he found great company and friends at King Edward’s:

At the age when many young men were discovering the charms of female company he was endeavouring to forget them and to push romance into the back of his mind. All the pleasures and discoveries of the next three years—and they were vital years in his development, as vital as the years with his mother—were to be shared not with Edith but with others of his sex, so that he came to associate male company with much that was good in life. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 53)

The school library was an important part of King Edward's, and Ronald, along with several other boys, was able to work in the library under a supervisor. The boys soon developed a friendship, which developed into an after-school group called the "Tea Club" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 53). They eventually moved their group to a store called Barrow's Stores, which had a Tea Room that they could use, and they changed their name to the Tea Club Barrovian Society (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 54).

There were three boys that formed the nucleus of the group, and were the most consistent members. They each had their own areas of expertise that would contribute to their academic discussions:

The membership of this curious and unofficial body fluctuated a little, but it soon achieved a constant nucleus in the persons of Tolkien, Christopher Wiseman, and Robert Quilter Gilson. 'R.Q.' had inherited from his father a lively face and a quick brain, but perhaps in reaction to the paternal enthusiasm for scientific invention he devoted his private energies to drawing and design, at which he displayed a talent. He was quiet-spoken but witty, fond of Renaissance painting and the eighteenth century. Here his tastes and expertise contrasted with those of the other two. Wiseman was knowledgeable about natural sciences and music; he had become an excellent mathematician and an amateur composer. 'John Ronald', as they called Tolkien, was versed in Germanic languages and philology, and had immersed himself thoroughly in Northern writings. Yet common to these three enthusiastic schoolboys was a thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek literature; and from this balance of similar and dissimilar tastes, shared and unshared knowledge, friendship grew. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 54)

Later on, a fourth member was introduced, Geoffrey Bache Smith, who did not involve himself in the classics, as the other three did, but instead focused on more modern pursuits. “The T.C.B.S. took him into its ranks partly for this and partly because he had a qualification all too rare at King Edward’s: he was knowledgeable about English literature, especially poetry; indeed he himself was a practicing poet of some competence. Under the influence of ‘G.B.S.’ the T.C.B.S. began to wake up to the significance of poetry –as indeed Tolkien was already doing” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 55).

When he was eighteen, Tolkien tried to start writing verse, and his first poems were about fantastical creatures, such as fairies and elves. In July 1910, he wrote a descriptive poem about a forest scene and titled it “Wood-sunshine”. The poem read: “Come sing ye light fairy things tripping so gay/Like visions, like glinting reflections of joy/All fashion’d of radiance, careless of grief/O’er this green and brown carpet; nor hasten away/ O! Come to me! Dance for me! Sprites of the wood/ O! come to me! Sing to me once ere ye fade!” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 55). Although his poem was rather rough, he read a particular poet, Francis Thompson, who may have inspired him to write about such subjects:

Perhaps of more importance was his enthusiasm for the Catholic mystic poet Francis Thompson. By the end of his school career he was familiar with Thompson’s verse, and later he became something of an expert on him. In ‘Wood-sunshine’ there is a distinct resemblance to an episode in the first part of Thompson’s ‘Sister Songs’ where the poet sees first a single elf and then a swarm of woodland sprites in the glade; when he moves, they vanish. It may be that this was a source of Tolkien’s interest in such things. Whatever their origins, dancing

elves were to appear many times in his early poems. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 55-6)

Ronald tried to spend much of the year of 1910 studying for his next attempt for the scholarship exam at Oxford, but the activities available at King Edward's provided many distractions. He also spent a lot of time studying and inventing languages, and he would give debates in which he spoke Greek, Gothic, and Anglo-Saxon (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 56). Despite the distractions, he felt that he was adequately prepared to take the exam, and so in December he took the exam and was successful:

This time he was successful. On 17 December 1910 he learnt that he had been awarded an Open Classical Exhibition to Exeter College. The result was not as pleasing as it might have been, for he was sufficiently accomplished to have won a valuable scholarship, and this Exhibition (a slightly inferior award) was worth only sixty pounds a year. However it was no mean achievement, and with the aid of a school-leaving bursary from King Edward's and additional help from Father Francis it would be possible for him to go up to Oxford. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 57)

In his final year at King Edward's, he continued to excel in his activities and in his studies of language:

He read a paper to the school Literary Society on Norse Sagas, illustrating it with readings in the original language. And at about this time he discovered the Finnish *Kalevala* or Land of Heroes, the collection of poems which is the principal repository of Finland's mythology. Not long afterwards he wrote appreciatively of 'this strange people and these new gods, this race of unhypocritical low-brow

scandalous heroes’, adding ‘the more I read of it, the more I felt at home and enjoyed myself’. He had discovered the *Kalevala* in W.H. Kirby’s Everyman translation, and he determined to find an edition in the original Finnish as soon as possible. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 57)

Tolkien had found another language to add to his list of languages to study, and Finnish would greatly influence his later studies.

The summer term of 1911 was his last at King Edward’s, and an invitation for a journey to Switzerland was extended to him through his brother. Hilary worked for a family that had decided to take their children and Ronald and Hilary’s Aunt Jane. After some days spent hiking and camping outdoors, Ronald and Hilary returned to England. However, the trip proved to be productive for Ronald’s imagination as well:

Before setting off on the return journey to England, Tolkien bought some picture postcards. Among them was a reproduction of a painting by a German artist, J. Madlener. It is called *Der Berggeist*, the mountain spirit, and it shows an old man sitting on a rock under a pine tree. He has a white beard and wears a wide-brimmed round hat and a long cloak. He is talking to a white fawn that is nuzzling his upturned hands, and he has a humorous but compassionate expression; there is a glimpse of rocky mountains in the distance. Tolkien preserved this postcard carefully, and long afterwards he wrote on the paper cover in which he kept it: “Origin of Gandalf”. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 59)

Upon his return to England, Ronald had to pack for his move to Oxford.

The majority of the schools that made up Oxford University were based on wealth and social status, and the undergraduates usually came from wealthy upper-class families. These

students usually made life harder for the poorer middle-class students. However, Ronald did not have to worry about social distinction at his school, which was Exeter College and which was all male. Although he had frequent troubles with money, his college experience started off relatively well. He became involved in many university activities, and made several friends that were of the same religion. Tolkien loved the social aspect of Oxford, and as a consequence, he did not study or work as much. However, there was one class in particular that he attended with regularity, and that was his philology class:

[Tolkien] was reading Classics, and he had to go to regular lectures and tutorials, but Exeter College had no resident classical tutor in his first two terms, and by the time the post was filled (by E.A. Barber, a good scholar but a dry teacher) Tolkien had got into slack ways. By now he was bored with Latin and Greek authors and was far more excited by Germanic literature. He had no interest in lectures on Cicero and Demosthenes and was glad to escape to his rooms where he could go on working at his invented languages. Yet there was one area of the syllabus that interested him. For his special subject he had chosen Comparative Philology, and this meant that he attended classes and lectures given by the extraordinary Joseph Wright. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 62-3)

Tolkien was especially drawn to Wright, although not just because of his interest in philology.

Wright had come from a working class family, which did not allow him to learn to read or write. However, he was determined to study at a college:

Joe Wright was a Yorkshireman, a truly self-made man who had worked his way up from the humblest origins to become Professor of Comparative Philology. He

had been employed in a woolen-mill from the age of six, and at first this gave him no chance to learn to read and write. But by the time he was fifteen he was jealous of his workmates who could understand the newspapers, so he taught himself his letters. This did not take very long and only increased his desire to learn, so he went to night-school and studied French and German. He also taught himself Latin and mathematics, sitting over his books until two in the morning and rising again at five to set out for work. By the time he was eighteen he felt that it was his duty to pass on his knowledge to others, so he began a night-school in the bedroom of his widowed mother's cottage, charging his workmates twopence a week for tuition. When he was twenty-one he decided to use his savings to finance a term's study at a German university, so he took a boat to Antwerp and walked stage by stage to Heidelberg, where he became interested in philology. So this former mill-hand studied Sanskrit, Gothic, Old Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Russian, Old Norse, Old Saxon, Old and Middle High German, and Old English, eventually taking a doctorate. Returning to England he established himself in Oxford, where he was soon appointed Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 63).

Wright became an important advisor for Tolkien at Oxford, and he encouraged and helped Tolkien in his pursuit and study of languages.

Wright was exactly who Tolkien needed to help him stay motivated and productive for his college career. When he found out that Tolkien had an interest in Welsh, Wright encouraged him to pursue it. "As a teacher, Wright communicated to Tolkien his huge enthusiasm for philology, the subject that had raised him from penniless obscurity. Wright was always a

demanding teacher, which was just what Tolkien needed. He had begun to feel a little superior to his fellow-classicists, with his wide-ranging knowledge of linguistics. But here was somebody who could tell him that he had a long way to go. At the same time Joe Wright encouraged him to show initiative. Hearing that Tolkien had an embryonic interest in Welsh, he advised him to follow it up—though he gave that advice in a characteristically Yorkshire manner: ‘Go in for Celtic, lad; there’s money in it’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 64).

Tolkien took Wright up on his advice, and he passionately studied Welsh literature and texts. He may have seen some Welsh on trains when he was younger, but the words could not compare with the actual language:

Tolkien followed this advice, though not exactly in the way that Joe Wright had intended. He managed to find books of medieval Welsh, and he began to read the language that had fascinated since he saw a few words of it on coal-trucks. He was not disappointed; indeed he was confirmed in all his expectations of beauty. Beauty: that was what pleased him in Welsh; the appearance and sound of the words almost irrespective of their meaning...Tolkien was so enthusiastic about Welsh that it is surprising that he did not visit Wales during his undergraduate days. But in a way this characterized his life. Though he studied the ancient literature of many countries he visited few of them, often through force of circumstance but perhaps partly through lack of inclination. And indeed the page of a medieval text may be more potent than the modern reality of the land that gave it birth. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 64-5).

His passion over the Welsh languages, and even his invented languages, became the only thing that he wanted to do, and he was lazy in his work. Also, without Father Francis there, he skipped mass frequently.

He also had the means to study the Finnish language, which he had not been able to do at King Edward's. He had known some Finnish texts only through their English translations, and he wanted to study the actual language:

At about this time [Tolkien] discovered Finnish. He had hoped to acquire some knowledge of the language ever since he had read the *Kalevala* in an English translation, and now in Exeter College library he found a Finnish grammar. With its aid he began an assault on the original language of the poems. He said afterwards: 'It was like discovering a wine-cellar filled with bottles of amazing wine of a kind and flavor never tasted before. It quite intoxicated me.' He never learned Finnish well enough to do more than work through part of the original *Kalevala*, but the effect on his language inventing was fundamental and remarkable. He abandoned neo-Gothic and began to create a private language that was heavily influence by Finnish. This was the language that would eventually emerge in his stories as 'Quenya' or High-elven. That would not happen for many years; yet already a seed of what was to come was germinating in his mind. He read a paper on the *Kalevala* to a college society, and in it began to talk about the importance of the type of mythology found in the Finnish poems. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 66-7)

His study of Finnish had already implanted in his mind the beginnings of some kind of invented mythology.

Around this time, Tolkien was looking forward to his twenty-first birthday and Edith Bratt. He had never forgotten her, as she had been a source of love and inspiration for him for the past three years. However, after he wrote to her, she responded that she had become engaged to the brother of her friend. Tolkien could not accept her answer though, and he determined that she still loved him despite her engagement. He decided that he would go to her and propose to her in order to prove to her that he still loved her.

There had been declarations and promises in the Duchess Road days that Ronald felt could not be lightly broken. Moreover Edith had been his ideal in the last three years, his inspiration and his hope for the future. He had nurtured and cultivated his love for her so that it grew in secret, even though it had to be fed solely on his memories of their adolescent romance and a few photographs of her as a child. He now perceived only one course of action: he must go to Cheltenham, beseech her to give up George Field, and ask her to marry him.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 69)

Once she learned that he still loved her, Edith agreed to leave George and marry Ronald.

After he reunited with Edith, he was able to turn his attention to his studies once more, for his Honor Moderations, which were a series of papers written on his subject. He found it hard to be able to study, and he still could not balance his study habits and his social life. “When Honour Moderations began at the end of February he was still poorly prepared for many papers. On the whole he was relieved when he learnt that he had at least managed to achieve a Second Class” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 70). A First Class was expected of him though if he was to continue with a career in academics. “A first in ‘Mods’ is not easy to achieve, but it is within the range of an able undergraduate who devotes himself to his work. Certainly it is

expected of someone who intends to follow an academic career, and Tolkien already had such a career in mind. However he had achieved a ‘pure alpha,’ a practically faultless paper, in his special subject, Comparative Philology. This was partly a tribute to the excellence of Joe Wright’s teaching, but it was also an indication that Tolkien’s greatest talents lay in this field” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 70). His college recommended that he switch from Classics to English, and he made the switch gladly.

Although he was in the subject of English, Tolkien would mainly study linguistics:

He would specialize in linguistic studies, and it was arranged that his tutor would be Kenneth Sisam, a young New Zealander who was acting as an assistant to A.S. Napier, the Professor of English Language and Literature. After meeting Sisam and surveying the syllabus Tolkien was ‘seized with panic, because I cannot see how it is going to provide me with honest labour for two years and a term’. It all seemed too easy and familiar; he was already well acquainted with many of the texts he would have to read, and he even knew a certain amount of Old Norse, which he was going to do as a special subject (under the Icelandic expert W.A. Craigie). Moreover Sisam did not at first appear to be an inspiring tutor. He was a quiet-spoken man only four years older than Tolkien, certainly lacking the commanding presence of Joe Wright. But he was an accurate and painstaking scholar, and Tolkien soon came to respect and like him. As to the work, Tolkien spent more time at his desk than he had while studying Classics. It was not as easy as he had expected, for the standard of the Oxford English School was very high; but he was soon firmly in command of the syllabus and was writing lengthy and intricate essays on ‘Problems of the dissemination of phonetic change’, ‘The

lengthening of vowels in Old and Middle English times,’ and ‘The Anglo-Norman element in English’. He was particularly interested in extending his knowledge of the West Midland dialect in Middle English because of its associations with his childhood and ancestry; and he was reading a number of Old English works that he had not previously encountered. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 71-72)

Among these texts was a group of religious poems entitled the *Crist of Cynewulf*, which were Anglo-Saxon in nature. “Two lines struck him forcibly: *Eala Earendel engla beorhtast/ofer middangeard monnum sended*. ‘Hail Earendel, brightest of angels/above the middle-earth sent unto men.’ *Earendel* is glossed by the Anglo-Saxon dictionary as ‘a shining light, ray’, but here is clearly has some special meaning. Tolkien himself interpreted it as referring to John the Baptist, but he believed that ‘Earendel’ had originally been the name for the star presaging the dawn, that is, Venus. He was strangely moved by its appearance in the Cynewulf lines. ‘I felt a curious three,’ he wrote long afterwards, ‘as if something had stirred in me, half wakened from sleep. There was something very remote and strange and beautiful behind those words, if I could grasp it, far beyond ancient English” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 72). This poem in particular excited his fantasy, and he would remember it later on.

His special subject also provided him with enough material to excite his imagination:

He found even more to excite his imagination when he studied his special subject. Old Icelandic, a branch of Old Norse, was the language that was brought to Iceland by the Norwegians who fled from their native land in the ninth century. Tolkien was already moderately acquainted with Norse, and he now made a thorough study of its literature. He read the sagas and the Prose or Younger Edda.

He also studied the Poetic or Elder Edda; and so it was that he came upon the ancient storehouse of Icelandic myth and legend. 'The Elder Edda' is the name given to a collection of poems, some of them incomplete or textually corrupt, whose principal manuscript dates from the thirteenth century. But many of the poems themselves are more ancient, perhaps originating at a period earlier than the settlement of Iceland. Some are heroic, describing the world of men, while others are mythological, treating of the deeds of gods. Among the mythological lays in the Elder Edda none is more remarkable than the *Voluspa* or Prophecy of the Seeress, which tells the story of the cosmos from its creation, and foretells its doom. The most remarkable of all Germanic mythological poems, it dates from the very end of Norse heathendom, when Christianity was taking the place of the old gods; yet it imparts a sense of living myth, a feeling of awe and mystery, in its representation of a pagan cosmos. It had a profound appeal to Tolkien's imagination. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 72-3)

During all this, Ronald and Edith wanted very much to marry, but she had to become a member of the Catholic Church first. There was also a great deal of opposition from the family she was currently staying with, who were strongly against Roman Catholicism. Edith herself was not happy with the move, and when the older couple asked her to leave, she had to find another place to live. She wanted to live independently of him until they were married, and she decided to move to Warwick with her cousin. However, all of this placed strain on her and Ronald's relationship. Three years apart had changed them separately, and they were no longer the same people as before:

Indeed he and Edith were not always happy when they were together. They no longer knew each other very well, for they had spent the three years of their separation in two totally different societies: the one all-male, boisterous, and academic; the other mixed, genteel, and domestic. They had grown up, but they had grown apart. From now on each would have to make concessions to the other if they were to come to a real understanding. Ronald would have to tolerate Edith's absorption in the daily details of life, trivial as they might seem to him. She would have to make an effort to understand his preoccupation with his books and his languages, selfish as it might appear to her. Neither of them entirely succeeded. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 74)

Part of the problem lay with Ronald; he did not show Edith the same man that he showed to his friends or to his work, but instead kept those parts of his life apart. Despite this, there was real love in their relationship, and Edith was eventually accepted into the Catholic Church. However, her life in Warwick, with her cousin, soon grew dreary, and she was tired of hearing how lively Oxford was from Ronald.

Ronald had found something new to preoccupy his mind as he had started to read the works of William Morris:

Morris had himself been an undergraduate at Exeter College, and this connection had probably stimulated Tolkien's interest in him. But until now he had apparently not become acquainted with Morris's imaginative writings. Indeed his knowledge of modern literature in general was limited, for the Oxford English School syllabus did not require that he, as a linguist, should make more than a comparatively superficial study of post-Chaucerian writers. During this time he

did make a few sketchy notes on Johnson, Dryden, and Restoration drama, but there is no indication that he had more than a passing interest in them. For him English literature ended with Chaucer; or to put it another way, he received all the enjoyment and stimulus that he could possibly require from the great poems of the Old and Middle English periods, and from the early literature of Iceland. But that was the very reason that he now found *The House of Wolfings* so absorbing.

Morris's view of literature coincided with his own. In this book Morris had tried to recreate the excitement he himself had found in the pages of early English and Icelandic narratives. *The House of the Wolfings* is set in a land which is threatened by an invading force of Romans. Written partly in prose and partly in verse, it centres on a House or family-tribe that dwells by a great river in a clearing of the forest named Mirkwood, a name taken from ancient Germanic geography and legend. Many elements in the story seemed to have impressed Tolkien. Its style is highly idiosyncratic, heavily laden with archaisms and poetic inversions in an attempt to recreate the aura of ancient legend. Clearly Tolkien took note of this, and it would seem that he also appreciated another facet of the writing: Morris's aptitude, despite the vagueness of time and place in which the story is set, for describing with great precision and details of his imagined landscape. Tolkien himself was to follow Morris's example in later years. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 77-8)

Morris had a great impact on Tolkien in his use of geography to create a sense of epic and wonder, and Tolkien would borrow this feature in writing his *Lord of the Rings* series.

In the summer of 1914, at the end of a long vacation, Tolkien wrote a poem entitled “The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 79). It began as follows:

‘Earendel sprang up from the Ocean’s cup/In the gloom of the mid-world’s rim/From the door of Night as a ray of light/Leapt over the twilight brim/And launching his bark like a silver spark/From the golden-fading sand/Down the sunlit breath of Day’s fiery death/He sped from Westerland’. The succeeding verses describe the star-ship’s voyage across the firmament, a progress that continues until the morning light blots out all sight of it. This notion of the star-mariner whose ship leaps into the sky had grown from the reference to ‘Earendel’ in the Cynewulf lines. But the poem that it produced was entirely original. It was in fact the beginning of Tolkien’s own mythology. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 79)

The invention of his new poem was not the only change in Tolkien’s life in the summer of 1914. Germany declared war on Britain, and every able-bodied man was called to fight in World War I. Although Tolkien was more than willing to fight, he wanted to finish his degree at Oxford first, and the military promised to allow him to do this if he trained for the military during his studies until he would be shipped out: “He became more cheerful when he learnt of the existence of a scheme whereby he could train for the army while at the University but defer his call-up until after he had taken his degree. He signed on for it” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 80). World War I affected Tolkien in mainly two ways. The first was that he was productive in his writing, for in the trenches of France he started writing characters and chapters from his *Lord of the Ring* series. The second was that most of his friends, such as the group from

King Edward's, died on the battlefields of France, and their deaths had an enormous impact on Tolkien and his writing.

Even after he graduated from King Edward's and went to Oxford, Tolkien still kept in contact with the guys from the T.C.B.S. group, and he still considered them to be some of his best friends:

At the beginning of the Christmas vacation of 1914 he travelled to London to attend a gathering of the T.C.B.S. Christopher Wiseman's family had moved south, and at their Wandsworth house there assembled all four members of their 'club': Tolkien, Wiseman, R.Q. Gilson, and G.B. Smith. They spent their weekend chiefly in sitting around the gas fire in the little upstairs room, smoking their pipes and talking. As Wiseman said, they felt 'four times the intellectual size' when they were together. It was curious how they had gone on meeting and writing to each other, this little group of school-friends. But they had begun to hope that together they might achieve something of value. Tolkien once compared them to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but the others scoffed at the idea. Yet they did feel that in some way they were destined to kindle a new light. Perhaps it was no more than the last spark of childhood ambition before it was snuffed out by experience of the world, but for Tolkien at least it had an important and practical result. He decided that he was a poet. Afterwards he explained that this T.C.B.S. meeting late in 1914 had helped him to find 'a voice for all kind of pent up things', adding: 'I have always laid that to the credit of the inspiration that even a few hours with the four brought to us.' (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 81)

While he was still at Oxford and had the time, Tolkien began writing more frequently on the projects that he had been developing over time. He really started to research poetry and began writing verses. His friends were supportive of his work, although the pieces were not that good, and Wiseman and G.B. Smith in particular gave him critical feedback. He wrote several different poems that were not really connected to each other, but he soon found that this was not what he wanted:

[Tolkien] soon came to feel that the composition of occasional poems without a connecting theme was not what he wanted. Early in 1915 he turned back to his original Earendel verses and began to work their theme into a larger story. He had shown the original Earendel lines to G.B. Smith, who had said that he liked them but asked what they were really about. Tolkien had replied: ‘ I don’t know. I’ll try to find out.’ Not try to invent: try to find out. He did not see himself as an inventor of story but as a discoverer of legend. And this was really due to his private languages. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 83)

During his time at King Edward’s and Oxford, even when he was very young, Tolkien had always been a developer of language. He loved to invent his own languages, and he had been doing this for quite some time. It is mentioned above that he began to learn Greek at the young age of ten, along with the languages of French and Latin that his mother taught him. At eleven years old, “he acquired Chambers’ *Etymological Dictionary*, which gave him his first glimpse of the principle of ‘sound shift’ by which languages evolve. This opened a new world” (Garth 15). Chambers’ dictionary introduced Tolkien to the history of philology, and some of the laws that put the practice into being. “Chambers’ dictionary introduced Tolkien to the most famous of all,

Grimm's Law...By the time he met Grimm's Law, Tolkien had begun inventing languages of his own" (Garth 15).

Tolkien had a particular method that he used when he first started forming his own languages:

When the young Tolkien first set to work at linguistic invention on an organized basis, he decided to take an existing language as a model or at least a starting-point. Welsh was not available to him in sufficient quantity, so he turned to another favorite source of words, the collection of Spanish books in Father Francis' room. His guardian spoke Spanish fluently and Ronald had often begged to be taught the language, but nothing came of it, though he was given the freedom of the books. Now he looked at them again and began work on an invented language that he called 'Naffarin'. It showed a great deal of Spanish influence, but it had its own system of phonology and grammar. He worked at it now and then, and he might have developed it still further had he not discovered a language that excited him far more than Spanish. One of his school-friends had bought a book at a missionary sale, but found that he had no use for it and sold it to Tolkien. It was Joseph Wright's *Primer of the Gothic Language*. Tolkien opened it and immediately experienced 'a sensation at least as full of delight at first looking into Chapman's *Homer*'. Gothic ceased to be spoken with the decline of the Gothic peoples, but written fragments survived for posterity, and Tolkien found them immensely attractive. He was not content simply to learn the language, but began to invent 'extra' Gothic words to fill gaps in the limited vocabulary that survived, and to move on from this to the construction of a

supposedly unrecorded but historical Germanic language...Tolkien also began to develop his invented languages backwards; that is, to posit the hypothetical 'earlier' words which he was finding necessary for invention by means of an organized 'historical' system. He was also working on invented alphabets; one of his notebooks from schooldays contains a system of code-symbols for each letter of the English alphabet. It was languages that occupied him most. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 44-5)

This kind of process would be seen again as Tolkien started developing his language that would tie his poems and ideas together. Unfortunately, there are no examples of Naffarin surviving as Tolkien abandoned the language, probably because there was no mythology for it.

Tolkien decided to use the Finnish as some kind of an influence for his new language, although it would definitely not be considered as a base:

[Tolkien] had been working for some time at the language that was influenced by Finnish, and by 1915 he had developed it to a degree of some complexity. He felt that it was 'a mad hobby', and he scarcely expected to find an audience for it. But he sometimes wrote poems in it, and the more he worked at it the more he felt that it needed a 'history' to support it. In other words, you cannot have a language without a race of people to speak it. He was perfecting the language; now he had to decide to whom it belonged. When talking about it to Edith he referred to it as 'my nonsense fairy language'. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 83)

Tolkien started with the language, and eventually he worked his language to develop a mythology:

During 1915 the picture became clear in Tolkien's mind. This, he decided, was the language spoken by the fairies or elves whom Earendel saw during his strange voyage. He began work on a 'Lay of Earendel' that described the mariner's journeyings across the world before his ship became a star. The Lay was to be divided into several poems, and the first of these, 'The Shores of Faery', tells of the mysterious land of Valinor, where Two Trees grow, one bearing golden sun-apples and the other silver moon-apples. To this land comes Earendel (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 84).

Thus, Tolkien's mythology was underway.

At the time that he was developing his ideas, he was also preparing to graduate from Oxford. "While Tolkien's mind was occupied with the seeds of his mythology he was preparing himself for Schools, his final examination in English Language and Literature. The examination began in the second week of June 1915, and Tolkien was triumphant, achieving First Class Honours" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 85). He wanted to obtain a job in academics, but he must first serve his term in the military: "He could in consequence be reasonably certain of getting an academic job when the war was over; but in the meantime he had to take up his commission as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 85). He and his platoon traveled to many different places to complete their training, and the time passed slowly for him. However, even in the military, he could not completely separate himself from language:

By the beginning of 1916 [Tolkien] had decided to specialize in signaling, for the prospect of dealing with words, messages, and codes was more appealing than the drudgery and responsibility of commanding a platoon. So he learnt Morse code,

flag and disc signaling, the transmission of messages by heliograph and lamp, the use of signal-rockets and field-telephones, and even how to handle carrier pigeons (which were sometimes used on the battlefield). Eventually he was appointed battalion signaling officer. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 85-6)

Tolkien's training was coming to an end, and he would soon have to leave England for France. There was another matter that he wanted to address before leaving. "Embarkation for France was now near, and he and Edith decided to get married before he left, for the appalling death-roll among the British troops made it clear that he might never return" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 86). They wanted to get Father Francis to do the ceremony, but fearing he might oppose them, they decided to marry in the Catholic Church in Warwick: "Ronald Tolkien and Edith Bratt were married by Father Murphy after early mass on Wednesday 22 March 1916" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 86). After their marriage, he only had time to see that Edith had a proper home before he left for France.

Tolkien's experience in the war was similar to the thousands of other soldiers that participated in the fighting. He spent a great deal of time in the trenches, and he watched the destruction and death. Of course, one of the greatest aspects of his experience was the companionship between the men. He got to know several of the officers very well as they waited in the trenches. This experience is shown later in his books: "Discussing one of the principal characters in *The Lord of the Rings* he wrote many years later: 'My "Sam Gamgee" is indeed a reflexion of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war, and recognized as so far superior to myself'" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 89). There were many other ways in which the war influenced Tolkien's mind.

During World War I, all young men were called to fight for their country. This draft did not only include Tolkien, but also his friends, who were stationed in different sections and areas from him. The death toll continued to be high throughout the war, and the possibility that the war would claim the lives of his friends seemed inevitable. On July 1, 1916, Rob Gilson was the first to die of the four of the T.C.B.S. “Rob Gilson had died at La Boisselle, leading his men into action on the first day of the battle, 1 July” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 92). Tolkien and his battalion continued to occupy the trenches, and eventually Tolkien fell ill and was diagnosed with trench fever: “Carried by lice, it caused a high temperature and other fever symptoms, and already thousands of men had reported sick with it” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 93). Tolkien was placed in the hospital for a week, and when he showed no signs of improving, he was placed on a train to return to Birmingham in England. While there, he received more bad news about his friends. “[G.B.] Smith had been walking down the road in a village behind the lines when a shell burst near him; he was wounded in the right arm and thigh. An operation was attempted, but gas-gangrene had set in. They buried him in Warlencourt British Cemetery” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 93). Before he died, Smith had sent a letter to Tolkien telling him, ““May God bless you, my dear John Ronald, and may you say the things I have tried to say long after I am not there to say them, if such is my lot”” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 94). These words greatly affected Tolkien, and he set out more determined than ever to write something that represented all that him and his friends had learned: “G.B. Smith’s words were a clear call to Ronald Tolkien to begin the great work that he had been meditating for some time, a grand and astonishing project with few parallels in the history of literature. He was going to create an entire mythology” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 97).

With much time spent in the hospital, Tolkien was given ample amounts of time to practice building his mythology, and for him, his ideas for the mythology started in his invented languages:

The idea had its origins in his taste for inventing languages. He had discovered that to carry out such inventions to any degree of complexity he must create for the languages a 'history' in which they could develop. Already in the early Earendel poems he had begun to sketch something of this history; now he wanted to record it in full. There was another force at work: his desire to express his most profound feelings in poetry, a desire that owed its origin to the inspiration of the T.C.B.S... And there was a third element playing a part: his desire to create a mythology for England. He had hinted at this during his undergraduate days when he wrote of the Finnish *Kalevala*: 'I would that we had more of it left—something of the same sort that belonged to the English.' (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 97)

His current setting after the war became the ideal place to start writing his ideas fully as:

here now was the time and place: he was once more with Edith and at Great Haywood, in the English countryside that was so dear to him. Even Christopher Wiseman far away at sea sensed that something was about to happen. He wrote to Tolkien: 'You ought to start the epic.' And Tolkien did. On the cover of a cheap notebook he wrote in thick blue pencil the title that he had chosen for his mythological cycle: 'The Book of Lost Tales'. Inside the notebook he began to compose when eventually became known as *The Silmarillion*. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 98)

There is no actual account of how Tolkien composed and outlined his mythology, and that is simply because Tolkien himself did not know how it worked. “No account of the external events of Tolkien’s life can provide more than a superficial explanation of the origins of his mythology...When Tolkien began to write he drew upon some deeper, richer seam of his imagination than he had yet explored; and it was a seam that would continue to yield for the rest of his life” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 98). *The Silmarillion* explores though the creation of the universe that Tolkien wanted to use as the setting for his mythology:

The first of the ‘legends’ that make up *The Silmarillion* tell of the creation of the universe and the establishing of the known world, which Tolkien, recalled the Norse *Midgard* and the equivalent words in early English, called ‘Middle-earth’. Some readers have taken this to refer to another planet, but Tolkien had no such intention. ‘Middle-earth is our world,’ he wrote, adding: ‘I have (of course) placed the action in a purely imaginary (though not wholly impossible) period of antiquity, in which the shape of the continental masses was different.’ Later stories in the cycle deal chiefly with the fashioning of the ‘Silmarilli’ (the three great jewels of the elves which give the book its title), their theft from the blessed realm of Valinor by the evil power Morgoth, and the subsequent wars in which the elves try to regain them. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 98-9)

All these stories were just small pieces in a much greater scheme.

As the author of this mythology, Tolkien could not help but integrate aspects of his own beliefs into this invented world. This is particularly noticeable in the aspect of religion in the stories:

The Silmarillion is the work of a profoundly religious man. It does not contradict Christianity but complements it. There is in the legends no worship of God, yet God is indeed there, more explicitly in *The Silmarillion* than in the work that grew out of it, *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's universe is ruled over by God, 'The One'. Beneath him in the hierarchy are 'The Valar', the guardians of the world, who are not gods but angelic powers, themselves holy and subject to God; and at one terrible moment in the story they surrender their power into His hands.

Tolkien cast his mythology in this form because he wanted it to be remote and strange, and yet at the same time not to be a lie. He wanted the mythological and legendary stories to express his own moral view of the universe; and as a Christian he could not place this view in a cosmos without the God that he worshipped. At the same time, to set his stories 'realistically' in the known world, where religious beliefs were explicitly Christian, would deprive them of their imaginative color. So while God is present in Tolkien's universe, He remains unseen. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 99)

Tolkien felt deeply about his characters, and he never felt as if he were inventing, but instead, actually writing something that had always been there:

When he wrote *The Silmarillion* Tolkien believed that in one sense he was writing the truth. He did not suppose that precisely such peoples as he described, 'elves', 'dwarves', and the malevolent 'orcs', had walked the earth and done the deeds that he recorded. But he did feel, or hope, that his stories were in some sense an embodiment of a profound truth. This is not to say that he was writing an allegory: far from it... While writing *The Silmarillion* Tolkien believed that he

was doing more than inventing a story. He wrote of the tales that make up the book: ‘They arose in my mind as ‘given’ things, and as they came, separately, so too the links grew. An absorbing, though continually interrupted labour (especially, even apart from the necessities of life, since the mind would wing to the other pole and spread itself on the linguistics): yet always I had the sense of recording what was already “there”, somewhere: not of “inventing”. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 99-100)

Tolkien believed so wholeheartedly in his writing as something that was not just of fiction, but that actually had a story and background to it.

As mentioned before, Tolkien wrote many of his stories for *The Silmarillion* in the hospital in England as he was still recovering from his illness. Among these tales, he found the characters that would be the speakers of his invented language. His first story to be written was the “Fall of Gondolin,” which he wrote in the hospital at Great Haywood. This story was the first that connected with the mythology first described in the Earendel poems. Although many suggestions are made as to who or what influenced Tolkien in his works, he still maintained his own creativity:

Tolkien used no models or sources for his strange and exciting tale. Indeed its two most notable characteristics are entirely his own device: the invented names, and the fact that the majority of the protagonists are elves. Strictly speaking it could be said that the elves of *The Silmarillion* grew out of the ‘fairy folk’ of Tolkien’s early poems, but really there is little connection between the two. Elves may have arisen in his mind as a result of his enthusiasm for Francis Thompson’s ‘Sister Songs’ and Edith’s fondness for ‘little elfin people’, but the elves of *The*

Silmarillion have nothing whatever to do with the ‘tiny leprechauns’ of ‘Goblin Feet’. They are to all intents and purposes men: or rather, they are Man before the Fall which deprived him of his powers of achievement. Tolkien believed devoutly that there had once been an Eden on earth, and that man’s original sin and subsequent dethronement were responsible for the ills of the world; but his elves, though capable of sin and error, have not ‘fallen’ in the theological sense, and so are able to achieve much beyond the powers of men. They are craftsmen, poets, scribes, creators of works of beauty far surpassing human artifacts. Most important of all they are, unless slain in battle, immortal. Old age, disease, and death do not bring their work to an end while it is still unfinished or imperfect. They are therefore the ideal of every artist. These, then, are the elves of *The Silmarillion*, and of *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien himself summed up their nature when he wrote of them: ‘They are made by man in his own image and likeness; but freed from those limitations which he feels most to press upon him. They are immortal, and their will is directly effective for the achievement of imagination and desire’. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 100-1)

The elves would serve as the vessels for some of the invented languages that he had worked on for a majority of his life so far.

Language was the first structure in these books that helped to build the other essential components of the novels:

Language can be used, in appropriate circumstances, to memorialize, but its primary function is to communicate, to express meaning in ways that others around us can understand. Language is also a reflection of culture, in that the

language or languages that spring from a particular culture reflect the way in which that culture experiences and understands the world. Middle-earth is a multilingual and multicultural universe in which linguistic changes reflect the history of its people. Thus Quenya and Sindarin develop into separate languages after the sundering of the Elves... The ability and willingness to communicate with other ethnic and linguistic groups is an important trait of most of the inhabitants of Middle-earth, and a key factor in the ultimate defeat of Sauron by the free peoples. (Dawson 117)

Thus, once again, language is extremely important in establishing the characters of Middle-earth.

Tolkien had obviously done much work on inventing his languages up to the time he started writing his mythology, and he had obviously studied many different languages to create these. “An important aspect of the linguistic authenticity that Tolkien considered essential to his project of cultural recovery was his use of different registers of language—a range of styles, vocabulary, and tone—which he deemed appropriate to specific characters and situations” (Dawson 107-8). However, there were two languages that had the most impact, and those were the Finnish and Welsh languages:

Since the existence of these [invented] languages was a *raison d'être* for the whole mythology, it is not surprising that he devoted a good deal of attention to the business of making up names from them. Indeed the name-making and the linguistic work associated with it came to occupy just as much if not more of his attention than the writing of the stories themselves... Tolkien had sketched a number of invented languages when he was an adolescent, and had developed

several of them to a degree of complexity. But ultimately only one of these early experiments had pleased him, and had come to express his personal linguistic taste. This was the invented language that had been heavily influenced by Finnish. He called it 'Quenya', and by 1917 it was very sophisticated, possessing a vocabulary of many hundreds of words (based albeit on a fairly limited number of word-stems). Quenya was derived, as any 'real' language would have been, from a more primitive language supposedly spoken in an earlier age; and from this 'Primitive Eldarin' Tolkien created a second elvish language, contemporary with Quenya but spoken by different peoples of elves. This language he eventually called 'Sindarin', and he modeled its phonology on Welsh, the language that after Finnish was closest to his personal linguistic taste. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 101-2)

One may ask what exactly what is was about the Finnish and Welsh languages that attracted Tolkien, or what it was about any language that attracted him, and Tolkien himself could not exactly describe it. However, his exact words in one of his essays were:

The nature of this pleasure [for language] is difficult, perhaps impossible, to analyze. It cannot, of course, be discovered by structural analysis. No analysis will make one either like or dislike a language, even if it makes more precise some of the features of style that are pleasing or distasteful. The pleasure is possibly felt most strongly in the study of a 'foreign' or second-learned language; but is so that may be attributed to two things: the learner meets in the other language desirable features that his own or first-learned speech has denied to him;

and in any case he escapes from the dulling of usage, especially inattentive usage.
(Tolkien, English and Welsh 191).

On a side note, Tolkien was not the first author of invented languages. Around the time that he was writing his own languages, this critical study of invented languages was occurring around the language of Esperanto. Esperanto was first invented by Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof in 1887 for the purpose of becoming a second international language that was easy to learn and was in no way political. Zamenhof, after witnessing slaughter and massacre in Russia, wanted to create a Utopia of some kind, and he wanted his language to accomplish peace and understanding between people. In his defense of his language, he said: “All prized Esperanto not because it brings closer together the bodies or even the brains of mankind, but because it brings closer together the heart of humanity” (Aspirations of the Founder of Esperanto. Dr. Zamenhof's Address to the Second Esperanto Congress 4). Esperanto is the only constructed language that has managed to have native speakers, or has been passed from generation to generation, and has managed to become successful. It is referred to as a constructed “international auxiliary language” (Johns 286). Tolkien, being a philologist, did study a little of the language, although in the end, he did not approve of it. He said: “Volpük, Esperanto, Ido, Novial, etc. etc. are dead, far deader than ancient unused languages, because their authors never invented any Esperanto legends” (Carpenter, The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien 231). For Tolkien, a language could not exist without a legend, or a mythology, and vice versa. Esperanto did not have a mythology, and so Tolkien could not accept it as a language. This was the reason that, after Tolkien invented his languages, he had to write a world in which they could exist. In one of his letters, he wrote:

It has been a considerable labour, beginning really as soon as I was able to begin anything, but effectively beginning when I was an undergraduate and began to

explore my own linguistic aesthetic in language-composition. It was just as the 1914 War burst on me that I made the discovery that ‘legends’ depend on the language to which they belong; but a living language depends equally on the ‘legends’ which it conveys by tradition. (Carpenter, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* 231)

Language by itself means nothing; it is the society and culture of a people that give it meaning.

To go into more detail on where the exact influences are from the Finnish and Welsh languages, linguists have looked to the phonology and morphology of the Quenya and Sindarin examples from the text and compared them to that of Finnish and Welsh respectively:

For both languages, there is a recognition of the ultimate historical and phonological relatedness, and of the fundamental (*prefix*) + *root* + (*suffix*) structure that underlay them in the parent Common Eldarin language. For Quenya, there is an inventory of the rich set of derivational endings inherited from Common Eldarin; a large set of case endings in the noun (e.g. nominative, old accusative, genitive, instrumental), including a variety of adverbial cases (e.g. locative, allative, ablative), in four numbers (singular, a remnant dual, and two plurals), indicating the influence of Latin and Finnish on this highly-inflected language. There is also a list of adjectives showing number agreement; an incomplete personal pronominal system (with well-attested first singular and plural, the latter with both inclusive and exclusive forms, but sketchy second and third persons), with both independent (emphatic) and verb-suffixed forms, subject, object, and possessive (the verb-suffixed pronouns contributing to the

agglutinative aspect of Quenya), as well as interrogative and deictic pronouns. There are verbs in two moods, active and imperative, with at least four tenses (present, past, past perfect, and future). For Sindarin, there was considerable evidence showing the influence of Welsh, particularly in its phonological development, in its *i*-affection plural formations (e.g. *adan* ‘man.’ pl. *edain*: *annon* ‘gate, door.’ pl. *ennyn*, etc.), and in the role of lenition not only in the formation of compounds and after certain grammatical forms of the definite article, but also in the suspicion (if not then demonstrable from the meager evidence) of its playing a function in grammar. It was recognized that Sindarin was also like Welsh in being considerably less inflected and more prepositional than Quenya. The definite article exhibited distinct singular and plural forms as well as case inflection. Nouns exhibited both singular and *i*-affection plural forms, as well as group plurals with various endings; adjectives also exhibited *i*-affection plural forms. The pronominal system was even more sketchy than that for Quenya, confined to first singular (with various prepositional forms, again á la Welsh), a second singular form obviously borrowed from Quenya, and tentative (though in the event correct) third plural demonstrative forms. The syntactic role of word-order in genitival/possessive constructions (e.g. *Ennyn Durin* ‘Doors of Durin,’ *Aran Moria* ‘Lord [of] Moria’) was recognized. Verbs were evidenced in two moods, active and imperative, and three tenses, present, past, and future, with participial forms in the present and past. (Hostetter 6-7)

The similarity of Sindarin to Welsh is much more obvious than that of Quenya to Finnish. As mentioned above, Quenya shows the influence of Finnish in that it has adverbial cases in four numbers. However, in *An Introduction to Elvish*, other examples are found:

All words in the extant corpus of Quenya end either in a vowel or in one of the dental/alveolar consonants *l*, *r*, *n*, and more rarely *t* and *s*. (In Finnish also these are the only allowable final consonants). Final *t* is found only on three forms where it indicates duality: *laituvalment* ‘We will praise (them???) both’, *maryat* ‘hands-her-two’, and *met* ‘us-two’. Final *s* is found only on the name *Arciryas* and on the form *utuvienyes* ‘I have found it’. (Allan 8)

Many of the books, including *An Introduction to Elvish*, were published before the examples from *The Silmarillion* could be included. As Quenya is basically a dead language in *The Lord of the Rings*, there are substantially fewer examples and studies done than that of Sindarin, which is more widely spoken in *The Lord of the Rings*.

As both languages are descended from the Eldarin tongues, or the languages of the elves, it is obvious that there would also be some similarities between the two. However, as there was no actual dictionary left by Tolkien on how the languages came to be, all the information had to be compiled from the various pieces of Quenya and Sindarin language:

Most of the phonology, morphology, and other departments of the grammar of Quenya and Sindarin had to be inferred by collecting and correlating all the available data and comparing forms in each language both with related forms in the same language and with (at least potential) cognate forms in the other language, and determining from this what systematic correspondence can be observed in the data. For example: by comparing the Sindarin words *adan* ‘man,’

pl. *edain*, with the obviously cognate Quenya words *Atani* ‘Men’ (all three forms attested in *The Lord of the Rings*), it can be seen that intervocalic *t* in Quenya corresponds to intervocalic *d* in Sindarin; and from this and many other such correspondences of intervocalic sounds observable in the data, a phonological rule can be inferred: that original voiceless stops (e.g. *p*, *t*, *k*) in intervocalic position remain voiceless in Quenya, but are voiced in Sindarin (to become *b*, *d*, *g*, respectively). It was also deduced from this and from other such singular versus plural comparisons in Sindarin and Quenya that the vowel variation seen in singular *adan* vs. plural *edain* is caused by an original plural ending that was retained as final *-i* in Quenya, but which was lost in Sindarin (as, it turns out, were all original final vowels), though not before it caused a change in the vowels of the syllables that preceded it: namely, in this case, raising and fronting the first *a* to *e*, and diphthongizing the second *a* to *ai*. (Hostetter 5-6)

In this difference of Quenya to Sindarin, the similarity that Sindarin has to the Welsh language is even more obvious:

It was also further observed by the contributors to *An Introduction to Elvish* that the changes of consonants in intervocalic position identified for Sindarin also occur in the initial consonant of words in certain grammatical situations: for example, the element *per-* ‘half,’ isolated by comparison of such words as *perian* ‘halfling, hobbit’ and *Peredhil* ‘Half-elven,’ occurs as *ber-* in the Sindarin phrase, ‘*Daur a Berhael....Eglerio!*,’ where *Daur* and *Berhael* translate the names of Frodo and Samwise (that is, ‘halfwise’) respectively; and therefore the initial *p-* or *per-* has been voiced to *b-*, just as it would be in intervocalic position. It was

recognized that this and similar changes were strongly reminiscent of the similar phenomenon in Welsh that is often called lenition, by which initial consonants in certain grammatical situations (e.g. as the direct object of a verb) undergo the same change that the consonant underwent historically in intervocalic position; and so it was further deduced (correctly, as it turned out) that the patterns of initial consonant mutation were modeled after (though not in all details precisely the same as) those of Welsh, both in the phonology of the change and in the grammatical usages. (Hostetter 6)

It is important to note that Tolkien did not simply just recycle words that already existed in the Finnish and Welsh languages, but did indeed create his own languages:

It is not to say that Tolkien did not ‘reuse’ elements from real languages in his own, or that names and characters from real-world history, myth, and legend are not found in Tolkien’s story...As Tolkien himself explains in one of his letters, the incidence of this sort of reuse is much, much less, and the nature and significance of it quite different than the decoders think. And so it is to say that Tolkien’s nomenclature, and his languages in general, are not simply an echoic hodgepodge of adopted and adapted words and names: rather, they are linguistic systems, each element of which (e.g. constituent sounds, root meanings, derivation and inflectional markers, etc.) stands in abstract, systematic relation to the other elements both within an individual language and across its cognates in other languages; and thus it is further to say that each word and name in Tolkien’s invented languages, by Tolkien’s own procedures and intent, as illustrated by his

own explanations, can (in principle) and must be explained *within* those linguistic systems; that is, *in terms* of his languages, not from outside. (Hostetter 4)

The critic Carl Hostetter has done extensive research on Tolkien's Quenya and Sindarin languages, and he gives many instances in the books of where to find these languages in action:

Throughout the story itself the reader encounters numerous elements from and examples of Tolkien's invented languages. By far the greatest such elements is the extensive Elvish nomenclature, drawn chiefly from Sindarin, but with a smaller presence of names in Quenya, these two being the chief Elvish languages and by far the most fully developed of Tolkien's inventions. A small but to the linguistically-minded reader perhaps more readily compelling element is the occurrence of actual Elvish dialogue, chiefly in the form of poems, songs, spells, and formal greetings and utterances in both Quenya and Sindarin: from example, and earliest, Frodo's Quenya greeting of Gildor and his company in Woody-end: the Sindarin hymn to Elbereth that Frodo hears on the eve of the Council of Elrond in Rivendell: the Sindarin inscription on the West gate of Moria and Gandalf's spell of opening in that language: Galadriel's Quenya lament and farewell to Frodo at the Fellowship's departure from Lorien: Sam's Sindarin invocation of Elbereth at Cirith Ungol: the Quenya and Sindarin praises of Sam and Frodo on the field of Cormallen: and Aragorn's Quenya coronation oath. (Hostetter 2)

The differences between Quenya and Sindarin are not extreme, but they were influenced by two very different languages. In the stories themselves, the languages are not so different in looks and appearances, but in how they are used and for what purpose. Quenya, as mentioned

before, is a dead language in that there is hardly anyone who can speak it in the books, and it is referred to as the High-Elven language. Galadriel is one of the only elves left who can remember the Quenya speech. Quenya is a lyrical language. However, the language remains only in certain phrases, such as those between friends, and some songs and poems (Foster 414-5). Sindarin, on the other hand, is widely spoken in the books. Although less lyrical than Quenya, it is nonetheless a graceful and beautiful language. It is the most commonly spoken Elvish language in the books, and is referred to as the Grey-elven language (Foster 460). These two languages make up the Eldarin, which is “the general name for the languages spoken by the Eldar” who are otherwise known as the elves (Foster 145). Although these languages had a realistic sense to them, they were still invented languages for a created mythology, and Tolkien was ultimately the only one who could easily decipher the phonological and morphological differences between the two languages.

Hostetter goes on in his article to say that Tolkien does somewhat explain these languages, and gives the English translation of most of the passages when Quenya and Sindarin is used. However, Tolkien did not go into great detail about he actually came about creating these languages:

While Tolkien does address this invented-language element in *The Lord of the Rings* directly in the appendices (particularly E and F), he does so only by way of a general and greatly compressed historical sketch, sufficient to establish, for example, that the Elvish languages are all related to another, and to delineate the chief phonetic characteristics of Quenya and Sindarin by which it is possible (usually) to distinguish forms in one language from those of the other. Tolkien also provides, in the text itself, translations for most (though not all) of the actual

Elvish dialogue encountered there, usually by way of a paraphrase of what has just been said by one of the characters. The Elvish nomenclature is not infrequently given in conjunction with an alternative English rendering of the name, and Tolkien's index gives here and there a translation for some names. Thus, Tolkien's put quite a lot of information concerning his languages into the story and its appendices and index, but it is scattered about and must be gathered up and correlated to make full use of it. Further, Tolkien provided directly, in *The Lord of the Rings* itself, very little by way of detail of phonological development and nothing concerning morphology or the other departments of descriptive grammar. These fundamental linguistic features instead must be inferred by analysis of Elvish texts and forms according to such translations as Tolkien does provide, and by comparison of forms in related languages to determine what systematic correspondences of sound and meaning can be deduced. (Hostetter 2-3)

Thus, whatever information is now available on Tolkien's languages has merely been what can be found from the information he left behind on his languages.

Another important feature of these invented languages, though, is that they were not, in any way, solid, but instead were constantly fluid and changing. Tolkien could never perfect his invented languages simply because they changed as he was writing the mythology and books to fit them. For example, the Quenya found in *The Silmarillion* is different from that found in *The Lord of the Rings*. As Tolkien's writing progressed over time, so did his languages:

There has long since arisen the implicit notion that Quenya and Sindarin were essentially sprung full-formed from Tolkien's mind: that is, that the phonology, grammar, and lexicon of Tolkien's languages were fixed by him at whatever time

they were first invented, and that the glimpses of them afforded by his writings as then published showed the languages as they were at their invention and had been ever since. But in fact, already by this time there had been several indications that Tolkien's languages were far from fixed, at any time, either before or after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, changes were made by Tolkien to some of the Quenya speech in the revised edition of *The Lord of the Rings* that appeared in 1965: thus, where in the first edition Frodo's greeting of Gildor in Woody-end reads: '*Elen sila lunenn' omentielmo*' (A star shines on the hour of our meeting), in the second edition the last word was revised to *omentielvo*. Tolkien offered a story-internal explanation for this change as correcting a mistake on Frodo's part, who had failed to correctly observe the Elvish distinction in the first person plural pronominal ending between 'we' inclusive of the person addressed, i.e. 'you and I' (*-lve*, here in genitive form *-lvo* 'of our') and 'we' exclusive of the person addressed, i.e. 'these others and I' (*-lme*, genitive *-lmo*); a mistake that Tolkien further explained as 'generally made by mortals,' for whom Quenya was both a foreign and a dead tongue. But as we now know, the external explanation lies in the fact that in the years after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien had continued to change his languages. (Hostetter 10),

The importance of the name-making cannot be overlooked, and so this is a brief description of Tolkien as he invented names for his characters:

It is impossible in a few sentences to give an adequate account of how Tolkien used his Elvish languages to make names for the characters and places in his

stories. But briefly, what happened was this. When working to plan he would form all these names with great care, first deciding on the meaning, and then developing its form first in one language and subsequently in the other; the form finally used was most frequently that in Sindarin. However, in practice he was often more arbitrary. It seems strange in view of his deep love of careful invention, yet often in the heat of writing he would construct a name that sounded appropriate to the character without paying more than cursory attention to its linguistic origins. Later he dismissed many of the names made in this way as ‘meaningless’, and he subjected others to a severe philological scrutiny in an attempt to discover how they could have reached their strange and apparently inexplicable form. This, too, is an aspect of his imagination that must be grasped by anyone trying to understand how he worked. As the years went by he came more and more to regard his own invented languages and stories as ‘real’ languages and historical chronicles that needed to be elucidated. In other words, when in this mood he did not say of an apparent contradiction in the narrative or an unsatisfactory name: ‘This is not as I wish it to be: I must change it.’ Instead he would approach the problem with the attitude: ‘What does this mean? I must find out.’ (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 102)

All of this had taken place at Gray Haywood, and after only a month, Tolkien was considered fit for duty once more. However, before he could leave Gray Haywood, he became ill again. This happened once more after that, and he eventually ended up in the Brooklands Officers’ Hospital in Hull (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 103). He was able to continue his writing, and Edith was pregnant. They decided to move her to Cheltenham, where

she had resided in the past. “About this time, perhaps while he was lying in the hospital in Hull, Tolkien composed another major story for ‘The Book of Lost Tales’. This was the tale of the hapless Turin, which was eventually given the title of ‘The Children of Húrin’... ‘The Children of Húrin’ is a powerful fusion of Icelandic and Finnish traditions, but it passes beyond this to achieve a degree of dramatic complexity and a subtlety of characterization not often found in ancient legends” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 104). *The Children of Húrin* was finally published as its own story in 2007 by Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company under the guidance of Christopher Tolkien. Edith gave birth to their son, John Francis Reuel, in Cheltenham, and by this time, Tolkien had been discharged from the hospital but was stationed at a camp, and therefore could not attend the birth. After the birth, Edith moved to the small town of Roos, which was not far from where Ronald was encamped.

It was during this time that Tolkien created one of his most beloved tales, one that became the focus of *The Silmarillion*:

On days when he could get leave, he and Edith went for walks in the countryside. Near Roos they found a small wood with an undergrowth of hemlock, and there they wandered. Ronald recalled of Edith as she was at this time: ‘Her hair was raven, her skin clear, her eyes bright, and she could sing – and dance.’ She sang and danced for him in the wood, and from this came the story that was to be the centre of *The Silmarillion*: the tale of the mortal man Beren who loves the immortal elven-maid Luthien Tinuviel, whom he first sees dancing among hemlock in a wood. This deeply romantic fairy-story encompasses a wider range of emotions than anything Tolkien had previously written, achieving at times a Wagnerian intensity of passion. It is also Tolkien’s first quest-story; and the

journey of the two lovers to Morgoth's terrible fortress, where they hope to cut a Silmaril from his Iron Crown, seems as doomed to failure as Frodo's attempt to carry the Ring to its destination. Of all his legends, the tale of Beren and Luthien was the one most loved by Tolkien, not least because at one level he identified the character of Luthien with his own wife. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 104-5)

After less than a year, Tolkien was posted in Penkridge where he had trained before going to France, and Edith and the baby went with him (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 105-6). However, he fell ill again, and was sent back to the hospital in Hull, where "besides working on his mythology and the elvish languages, he was teaching himself a little Russian and improving his Spanish and Italian" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 106). He was discharged from the hospital in October of 1918, and there appeared to be an end to the war in sight. With the desire to work at Oxford, Tolkien contacted the university, where he was told that he could find a job as an assistant lexicographer. And so, "when the war came to an end on 11 November, Tolkien contacted the army authorities and obtained permission to be stationed at Oxford 'for the purposes of completing his education' until demobilization" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 106). Thus, Edith and the baby moved with him to Oxford, and they began a new chapter in their lives.

During this time, Tolkien was employed to work at "The Dictionary" where "a small group of experts labored away at producing the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language ever to be compiled" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 107). Tolkien was called in to help decipher some of the meanings of certain words that had their roots in much older languages:

Tolkien enjoyed working at the Dictionary, and liked his other colleagues, especially the accomplished C.T. Onions. For his first weeks, he was given the job of researching the etymology of warm, wasp, water, wick (lamp), and winter. Some indication of the skill that this required may be gathered from a glance at the entry that was finally printed for wasp. It is not a particularly difficult word, but the paragraph dealing with it cites comparable forms in Old Saxon, Middle Dutch, Modern Dutch, Old High German, Middle Low German, Middle High German, Modern German, Old Teutonic, primitive pre-Teutonic, Lithuanian, Old Slavonic, Russian, and Latin. Not surprisingly, Tolkien found that this kind of work taught him a good deal about languages, and he once said of the period 1919-1920 when he was working on the Dictionary: 'I learned more in those two years than in any other equal period of my life.' He did his job remarkably well, even by the standards of the Dictionary, and Dr. Bradley [the supervisor] reported of him: 'His work gives evidence of an unusually thorough mastery of Anglo-Saxon and of the facts and principles of the comparative grammar of the Germanic languages. Indeed, I have no hesitation in saying that I have never known a man of his age who was in these respects his equal'. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 108)

Not long after this, Tolkien applied for the position for the post of Reader in English Language at the University of Leeds, which he did not expect to receive. However, after the interview, he was accepted. Leeds was not a very hospitable city though, and just before the term began, Edith gave birth to their second son Michael Hilary Reuel (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A

Biography 110). Due to the baby's birth, they could not immediately join Tolkien in Leeds, but after a year, they eventually moved.

Although he was still writing his mythology, Tolkien used his time wisely at the university to establish himself more fully as a scholar. He became friends with Eric Valentine Gordon, a man who transferred to take the position of junior lecturer, and he and Tolkien became good friends interested in mutual pursuits:

Soon after Gordon's arrival the two men began to collaborate on a major piece of scholarship. Tolkien had been working for some time at a glossary for a book of Middle English extracts that his former tutor Kenneth Sisam had edited. This meant in effect compiling a small Middle English dictionary, a task that he undertook with infinite precision and much imagination. The glossary took a long time to complete, but it reached print early in 1922, by which time Tolkien wanted to turn his hand to something that would give greater scope to his scholarship. He and E.V. Gordon decided to compile a new edition of the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, as there was none in print that was suitable for university students. Tolkien was to be responsible for the text and glossary while Gordon would provide the great part of the notes... They finished the book in time for publication by the Clarendon Press early in 1925. It was a major contribution to the study of medieval literature. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 111-12)

Life passed pleasantly for Tolkien, and he continued to work on his mythology. “‘The Book of Lost Tales’ was almost complete. At Oxford and at Leeds Tolkien had composed the stories that tell of the creation of the universe, the fashioning of the Silmarils, and their theft

from the blessed realm of Valinor by Morgoth. The cycle still lacked a clear ending—it was to conclude with the voyage of Earendel’s star-ship that had been the first element of the mythology to arise in Tolkien’s mind—and some of the stories were only in synopsis; but a little more effort would bring the work to a conclusion. Nevertheless Tolkien did not press on towards this objective, but began instead to rewrite. It was almost as if he did not want to finish it. Perhaps he doubted whether it would ever find a publisher; certainly it was a most unconventional work... So he did not complete *The Silmarillion* (as he came to call the book) but went back and altered and polished and revised. He also began to cast two of the principal stories as poems, an indication that he still aspired as much towards verse as towards prose. For the story of Turin he chose a modern equivalent of the type of alliterative measure that is found in *Beowulf*, and for the story of Beren and Luthien he elected to work in rhyming couplets. This latter poem he called ‘The Gest of Beren and Luthien’; later he renamed it ‘The Lay of Leithian’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 113-14). Around the beginning of 1924, Edith realized that she was pregnant again, and in November, she gave birth to another boy, Christopher Reuel, who was named in honor of Christopher Wiseman. A position opened at Oxford University for a professor in Anglo-Saxon, and with the support of many professionals, Tolkien was able to work at Oxford, which had been one of his many dreams.

Tolkien’s life after becoming a professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford did not include many wild adventures. Edith gave birth to another child, a long-desired daughter, in 1929, who was named Priscilla Mary Reuel. Tolkien’s life was relatively normal. In short:

Tolkien came back to Oxford, was Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon for twenty years, was then elected Merton Professor of English Language and Literature, went to live in a conventional Oxford suburb where he spent the

first part of his retirement, moved to a nondescript seaside resort, came back to Oxford after his wife died, and he himself died a peaceful death at the age of eighty-one (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 118).

To the day he died, Tolkien continued to wholeheartedly devote himself to philology and language. He was also principally involved in raising his family: “Tolkien was immensely kind and understanding as a father, never shy of kissing his sons in public even when they were grown men, and never reserved in his display of warmth and love” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 161).

Many have wondered at why Tolkien should choose to specialize in such a specific category as early English languages, or why someone with his capacity wouldn’t choose to study other languages:

The answer is to be found in his capacity for excitement. We know already of his emotional response to Finnish, Welsh, and Gothic, and we ought to understand that something equally exciting happened when he first realized that a large proportion of the poetry and prose of Anglo-Saxon and early medieval England was written in the dialect that had been spoken by his mother’s ancestors. In other words it was remote, but at the same time intensely personal to him. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 136)

Tolkien loved to teach his passion to his students, and his love for language came through in the classroom when he gave lectures. “Tolkien never lost his literary soul. His philological writings invariably reflect the richness of his mind. He brought to even the most intricate aspects of his subject a grace of expression and a sense of the larger significance of the matter”

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 139). Tolkien talked about languages as if they were actual living things, and he enforced its importance with imageries:

This kind of writing, force in its imagery, characterized all his articles and lectures, however abstruse or unpromising the subject might seem. In this respect he almost founded a new school of philology; certainly there had been no one before him who brought such humanity, one might say such emotion, to the subject; and it was an approach which influenced many of his most able pupils who themselves became philologists of distinction. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 139)

As mentioned above, Tolkien believed that languages needed a legend, or a mythology, and that a mythology needed the language; the two cannot exist without each other. As such, it is important to address the process by which Tolkien wrote and published his two most famous works because he gave them just as much time and devotion as he did with his languages. It is important to remember that he wrote his works of fiction *specifically* to give his invented languages the chance to be heard. The language is an integrated part of the book, but the mythology is just as important. This last portion of this paper is devoted to his tenacity in creating the world for both his mythology and language to be known.

There are many debates as to when Tolkien actually began to write *The Hobbit*. He did not want to finish *The Silmarillion*, and therefore had set it aside, and only added stories to it as they came to him. *The Hobbit* started when Tolkien chose to create Bilbo Baggins, a “character that embodied everything he loved about the West Midlands” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 179). He created the hobbits out of this as well, and “the hobbits represented the combination of small imagination with great courage which (as Tolkien had seen in the trenches

during the First World War) often led to survival against all chances. ‘I’ve always been impressed,’ he once said, ‘that we are here, surviving, because of the indomitable courage of quite small people against impossible odds’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 180). However, at the time he was writing *The Hobbit*, Tolkien had no idea how important the hobbits would be to his mythology: “It would be more accurate to say that not until the book was finished and published—indeed not until he began to write the sequel—did he realize the significance of hobbits, and see that they had a crucial role to play in his mythology. In itself *The Hobbit* began as merely another story for amusement. Moreover it nearly suffered the fate of so many others and remained unfinished” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 180). From a series of statements by his sons, critics concluded that:

The book was begun in 1930 or 1931 (when John, the eldest boy, was thirteen); certainly there was a completed typescript in existence (lacking only the final chapters) in time for it to be shown to C.S. Lewis late in 1932. However John and Michael Tolkien do not believe this to be the entire picture, for they have a clear memory of certain elements in the story being told to them in the study of 22 Northmoor Road, that is, before 1930. They were not certain that what they were listening to at that time was necessarily a written story: they believe that it may well have been a number of impromptu tales which were later absorbed into *The Hobbit* proper. The manuscript of *The Hobbit* suggests that the actual writing of the main part of the story was done over a comparatively short period of time: the ink, paper, and handwriting style are consistent, the pages are numbered consecutively, and there are almost no chapter divisions. It would also appear that Tolkien wrote the story fluently and with little hesitation, for there are

comparatively few erasures or revisions. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 181-2)

Even in *The Hobbit*, Tolkien was drawing from his knowledge of many languages.

Tolkien had no idea that *The Hobbit* would be the first book of his mythology; indeed he did not know that it had any connection whatsoever to *The Silmarillion* until he got further into the story:

The story began, then, merely for personal amusement. Certainly Tolkien had at first no intention that the bourgeois comfortable world of Bilbo Baggins would be related in any way to the vast mythological landscape of *The Silmarillion*.

Gradually, however, elements from his mythology began to creep in. Inevitably the dwarves suggested a connection, for ‘dwarves’ had played a part in the earlier work; and when in the first chapter of *The Hobbit* the wizard mentioned ‘the Necromancer’ there was a reference to the legend of Beren and Luthien. Soon it was apparent that the journey of Bilbo Baggins and his companions lay across a corner of that Middle-earth which had its earlier history chronicled in *The Silmarillion*. In Tolkien’s words this was ‘the world into which Mr. Baggins strayed’. And if the events of the new story were clearly set long after those of *The Silmarillion*, then, since the earlier chronicles recorded the history of the First and Second Ages of Middle-earth, it appeared that *The Hobbit* was to be a tale of the Third Age. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 182)

The Hobbit was first written as a children’s story, as this was a story that Tolkien had first told his own children:

‘One writes such a story,’ said Tolkien, ‘out of the leaf-mould of the mind’; and while we can still detect the shape of a few of the leaves—the Alpine trek of 1911, the goblins of the ‘Curdie’ books of George Macdonald, an episode in *Beowulf* when a cup is stolen from a sleeping dragon—this is not the essential point of Tolkien’s metaphor. One learns little by raking through a compost heap to see what dead plants originally went into it. Far better to observe its effect on the new and growing plants that it is enriching. And in *The Hobbit* the leaf-mould of Tolkien’s mind nurtured a rich growth with which only a few other books in children’s literature can compare. For it is a children’s story. Despite the fact that it had been drawn into his mythology, Tolkien did not allow it to become overwhelmingly serious or even adult in tone, but stuck to his original intention of amusing his own and perhaps other people’s children. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 182-3)

Tolkien worked on the story for a while until he reached a particular section that did not seem to fit right within the story, which was right after the dragon Smaug was slain. He did not know who should be the one to slay the dragon, and so the manuscript of *The Hobbit* lay in his study incomplete, and his son Christopher was afraid that it would never be completed, just as *The Silmarillion*. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 183). It would have remained so if not for the interference and help of one of Tolkien’s former pupils.

In 1936, Tolkien found a publisher for *The Hobbit*. Elaine Griffiths had been a pupil of Tolkien and had become a close family friend. With Tolkien’s help, she was asked by the publishers George Allen & Unwin in London to revise a translation of *Beowulf*. Her friend and former classmate, Susan Dagnall, worked at George Allen & Unwin, and Elaine asked her to

take a look at *The Hobbit*. Susan did, and she asked Tolkien to finish the manuscript, which stopped just after the death of the dragon:

She sent the typescript back to Tolkien, asking him if he would finish it, and preferably soon, so that the book could be considered for publication in the following year. Tolkien got down to work. On 10 August 1936 he wrote: ‘*The Hobbit* is now nearly finished, and the publishers clamouring for it.’ He engaged his first son Michael, who had cut his right hand badly on a school window, to help with the typing, using his left hand. The whole labour was finished by the first week of October, and the typescript was sent to Allen & Unwin’s offices near the British Museum, bearing the title *The Hobbit*, or *There and Back Again*.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 183-4)

The book was handed to the chairman’s son to determine its effectiveness as a book for children, and the boy loved it. The publishers and Tolkien had many disputes over the illustrations used in the book, but finally “*The Hobbit* was published on 21 September 1937” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 185). The book was met with huge success, not just in England, but also in America, and second reprinting was needed to meet demands. The publishing firm’s chairman “Stanley Unwin realized that he had a children’s bestseller in his list. He wrote to Tolkien: ‘A large public will be clamouring next year to hear more from you about hobbits!’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 186). The public would be expecting more material from Tolkien, and his publishers wanted to discuss more details with him right away.

Tolkien was asked to select some of his work for a possible publication, especially if any of his stories contained hobbits. After *The Hobbit* was published, Stanley Unwin came to Tolkien to ask for more of his work. Tolkien presented him with *The Silmarillion*, which he believed

would not be a good successor to *The Hobbit*. He also gave Unwin several children's tales, such as "Mr. Bliss," "Farmer Giles of Ham," and "Roverandom." He also gave him a manuscript for an incomplete novel titled "The Lost Road." However, none of these could be published as a follow-up to *The Hobbit*. Although the children's stories were enjoyed, they were not about hobbits, and "The Lost Road" was not a children's book. *The Silmarillion* was a different problem altogether:

But *The Silmarillion* presented a more complex problem. The manuscript of this lengthy work—or rather, the bundle of manuscripts—had arrived in a somewhat disordered state, and the only clearly continuous section seemed to be the long poem 'The Gest of Beren and Luthien'. So this poem was passed to a publisher's reader. The reader did not think much of it; in fact his report he was very rude about the rhyming couplets. But he hastened to say that he found the prose version of the Beren and Luthien story enthralling—Tolkien had presumably attached it to the poem for the purpose of completing the story, for the poem itself was unfinished. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 187-8)

Although *The Silmarillion* contained brilliant information, it was not what the publishers were looking for. "Stanley Unwin wrote to Tolkien on 15 December 1937: *The Silmarillion* contains plenty of wonderful material; in fact is a mine to be explored in writing further books like *The Hobbit* rather than a book in itself. I think this was partly your own view was it not? What we badly need is another book with which to follow up our success with *The Hobbit* and alas! neither of these manuscripts (the poem and *The Silmarillion* itself) quite fits the bill. I still hope that you will be inspired to write another book about the Hobbit" (Carpenter, J.R.R.

Tolkien: A Biography 188). Tolkien was happy that *The Silmarillion* was not totally disregarded. He replied:

My chief joy comes from learning *The Silmarillion* is not rejected with scorn. I have suffered a sense of fear and bereavement, quite ridiculous, since I let you this private and beloved nonsense out; and I think if it had seemed to you to be nonsense I should have felt really crushed. But I shall certainly now hope one day to be able, or to be able to afford, to publish *The Silmarillion*...I did not think any of the stuff I dropped on you filled the bill. But I did want to know whether any of the stuff had any exterior or non-personal value. I think it is plain that quite apart from it, a sequel or successor to *The Hobbit* is called for. (Carpenter, J.R.R.

Tolkien: A Biography 188)

Thus, Tolkien decided to start working on his sequel, although he had no idea exactly how the story would end. Tolkien started out writing *The Lord of the Rings* in some small degree of confusion. He had never tried to force a story, although he had some vague ideas for the plot. When he started it, he had no idea just how long of a project it would turn out to be:

The new story began rather like the first hobbit tale. Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Hobbiton gives a party to celebrate his birthday, and after making a speech to his guests he slips on the magic ring that he acquired in *The Hobbit*, and vanishes.

The reason for his disappearance, as given in the first draft, is that Bilbo 'had not got any money or jewels left' and was going off in search of more dragon-gold.

At this point the first version of the opening chapter breaks off, unfinished.

Tolkien had as yet no clear idea of what the new story was going to be about. At the end of *The Hobbit* he had stated that Bilbo 'remained very happy to the end of

his days, and those were extraordinarily long'. So how could the hobbit have any new adventures worth the name without this being contradicted? And had he not explored most of the possibilities in Bilbo's character? He decided to introduce a new hobbit, Bilbo's son... Then another idea occurred to him, and he wrote it down in memorandum form (as he was often to do during the invention of this new story): 'Make return of ring a motive'. The ring, after all, was both a link with the earlier book and one of the few elements of it that had not been fully developed. Bilbo had acquired it accidentally from the slimy Gollum beneath the Misty Mountains. Its power of making the wearer invisible had been exploited fully in *The Hobbit*, but it might be supposed to have other properties. Tolkien made some further notes: 'The Ring: whence its origin? Necromancer? Not very dangerous, when used for good purpose. But it exacts penalty. You must either lose it, or yourself.' Then he rewrote the opening chapter, calling the hero 'Bingo Bolger-Baggins' and making him Bilbo's nephew rather than his son. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 189-90)

After making some progress, Tolkien sent in the rough draft of the chapter to his publisher, who read it and was delighted by it. 'Tolkien was encouraged, but he replied [to his publisher's letter]: "I find it only too easy to write opening chapters—and at the moment the story is not unfolding. I squandered so much on the original "Hobbit" (which was not meant to have a sequel) that it is difficult to find anything new in that world' Nevertheless he set to work again and wrote a second chapter which he called 'Three's Company'. It told how Bingo with his cousins Odo and Frodo set off to make a journey across the countryside under the stars" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 190).

Although the story was progressing, it was also quickly building up and Tolkien could no longer control it:

‘Stories tend to get out of hand,’ Tolkien wrote to his publisher a few weeks later, ‘and this had taken an unpremeditated turn.’ He was referring to the appearance, unplanned by him, of a sinister ‘Black Rider’ who is clearly searching for the hobbits. It was indeed the first of several unpremeditated turns that the story was to take. Unconsciously, and usually without forethought, Tolkien was bending his tale away from the jolly style of *The Hobbit* towards something darker and grander, and closer in concept to *The Silmarillion*...Tolkien still did not have a clear idea what it was all about. Nor did he have much time to devote to it.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 190)

Tolkien still had to attend work at the university, and he could not neglect his family, and for many weeks, he did not work on the story. He had only written three chapters, but he did not know where the story was going and his publishers wanted immediate results. “On 24 July 1938 he wrote to Charles Furth at Allen & Unwin: ‘The sequel to *The Hobbit* has remained where it stopped. It has lost my favor, and I have no idea what to do with it.’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 191). This was not the first time that he had been stuck on an idea nor would it be the last.

After this incident, a tragedy occurred for Tolkien, one that affected him deeply. His friend E.V. Gordon died in a hospital, and the work on the sequel to *The Hobbit* was suspended even further. Afterwards, Tolkien began to organize his thoughts on the plot of the story:

Tolkien began to write some dialogue between Bingo and the elf Gildor, explaining the nature of it. It is, says the elf, one of a number of rings that were

made by the Necromancer, and it seems that he is looking for it. The Black Riders, explains the elf, are ‘Ring-wraiths’ who have been made permanently invisible by other rings. Now at last ideas began to flow, and Tolkien wrote a passage of dialogue between Bingo and the wizard Gandalf in which it is determined that the Ring must be taken many hundreds of miles to the dark land of Mordor, and there cast into ‘one of the Cracks of Earth’ where great fire burns. This was basis enough for the story to be continued, taking the hobbits to the house of Tom Bombadil. When this was done, on 31 August 1938, Tolkien wrote to Allen & Unwin that the book was ‘flowing along, and getting quite out of hand. It has reached about Chapter VII and progresses towards quite unforeseen goals’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 191).

During this time, Tolkien and his family went on a holiday to Sidmouth, where he was able to write more of his story and focus on his characters. He started writing the chapter where the hobbits come to the inn at Bree, and he no longer wanted to use the name Bingo as the name for the main hobbit. However, he could not bring himself to change it just yet. He also had to focus on the problem of the ring:

There was also the problem of why the Ring seemed so important to everyone—that had not yet been established clearly. Suddenly an idea occurred to him, and he wrote: ‘Bilbo’s ring proved to be the one ruling Ring—all others had come back to Mordor: but this one had been lost.’ The one ruling ring that controlled all the others; the ring that was the source and instrument of the power of Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor; the ring that must be carried to its destruction by the hobbits, or else the whole world will come under Sauron’s domination. Now

everything fell into place, and the story was lifted from the ‘juvenile’ level of *The Hobbit* into the sphere of grand and heroic romance. There was even a name for it: when next he wrote about it to Allen & Unwin, Tolkien referred to it as ‘*The Lord of the Rings*’. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 191-2)

Although Tolkien was originally induced to write the new story because of the first book, he quickly became heavily involved with the many interesting twists and turns he found while writing the new story:

What had happened was almost inevitable. Tolkien had not really wanted to write any more stories like *The Hobbit*; he had wanted to get on with the serious business of his mythology. And that was what he could now do. The new story had attached itself firmly to *The Silmarillion*, and was to acquire the dignity of purpose and the high style of the earlier book. True, the hobbits were still hobbits, small people with fur on their feet and funny names like Baggins and Gamgee (the family joke about ‘Gaffer Gamgee’ had led to the inclusion of a character of that name, and more important, to the invention of his son ‘Sam’, who was to play a major part in the story). In a sense the hobbits had only been acquired by accident from the earlier book. But now, for the first time, Tolkien realized the significance of hobbits in Middle-earth. The theme of his new story was large, but it was to have its centre in the courage of these small people; and the heart of the book was to be found in the inns and gardens of The Shire, Tolkien’s representation of all that he loved best about England...Tolkien went back to his intention of using the ‘Bingo’ character; but as the name ‘Bingo’ had now become quite unbearable to him in view of the serious nature the story had taken on, he

changed it to 'Frodo', a name that already belonged to a minor character. And 'Frodo' it remained. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 192-3)

Tolkien was now fully interested in completing his mythology when he had the time, but he was aware that *The Lord of the Rings* was not at all like *The Hobbit*. He was well-aware that a literature with a fantastical context may not be well-received by adults, which is the audience that *The Lord of the Rings* was written for; adults do not generally read 'fairy tales' because only children are supposed to read those. Tolkien was of a different opinion though, and in early 1939, he gave a lecture at Worcester College on the importance of fairy-stories:

The Hobbit was clearly designed for children and *The Silmarillion* for adults, but he was aware that *The Lord of the Rings* was less easy to categorize. In October 1938 he wrote to Stanley Unwin that it was 'forgetting "children" and becoming more terrifying than *The Hobbit*'. And he added: 'It may prove quite unsuitable'. But he felt strongly that fairy-stories are not necessarily for children, and he decided to devote much of his lecture to the proof of this belief... 'What really happens,' he wrote, 'is that the story-maker proves a successful "sub-creator". He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is "true": it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arise, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside'. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 194-5)

Tolkien hoped to convey to his audience that, even as a writer of fantasy (of that which is not real), he writes only about truth; that is, that his works are about truth:

[Tolkien] asserted in powerful terms that there is no higher function for man than the 'sub-creation' of a Secondary World such as he was already making in *The Lord of the Rings*, and he gave expression to his hope that in one sense this story and whole of his related mythology might be found to be 'true'. 'Every writer making a secondary world,' he declared, 'wishes in some measure to be a real maker, or hopes that he is drawing on reality: hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world (if not all the details) are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it.' (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 195)

Another way to address this would be perhaps that just because his story has elves, dwarves, and other magical beings does not mean that it does not possess some sort of realistic truth: "In Tolkien's work, the natural world does not exist merely to enhance or reflect the thoughts and feelings of humans; beings in Middle-earth, whether they be humans, Elves, Dwarves, hobbits, or Ents, as part of an organic whole; all feel sadness and distress as they witness the loss and destruction of any part of their universe" (Dawson 116).

After the lecture, Tolkien returned to writing *The Lord of the Rings* with more enthusiasm:

That story had been begun as a mere 'sequel' to *The Hobbit*, at the instigation of his publisher, but now, especially after the declaration of high purpose that he had made in the lecture, the Ring was as important to him as the Silmarils. In fact it was now clear that *The Lord of the Rings* was not so much a sequel to *The Hobbit* as a sequel to *The Silmarillion*. Every aspect of the earlier work was playing a part in the new story: the mythology itself, which provided both a historical setting and a sense of depth, the elvish languages that he had developed so painstakingly

and thoroughly over more than twenty-five years, even the Feanorian alphabet in which he had kept his diary from 1926 to 1933, and which he now used for elvish inscriptions in the story. Yet to his friends, Tolkien still referred to the story in modest terms as ‘the new Hobbit’ or ‘the Hobbit sequel’. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 195)

Around this time, Tolkien was asked to write an introduction on a translation of *Beowulf* for his good friend Elaine Griffiths. When Tolkien wrote the introduction, it “proved to be a lengthy discussion on the principles of translation, and in particular an argument in favour of the adoption of a ‘high style’ when dealing with heroic matters. Consciously or unconsciously, he was really discussing *The Lord of the Rings*, which had at that time (the beginning of 1940) reached the middle of Book II” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 196). Tolkien put the stylist approach of the ‘high style’ into practice in *The Lord of the Rings*, which was ‘almost inevitable, for as the story grew grander in scale and purpose it adopted the style of *The Silmarillion*; yet Tolkien did not make any stylistic revision of the first chapters, which had been written in a much lighter vein; and he himself noted when reading the book again twenty-five years later: ‘The first volume is really very different to the rest’” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 196).

Over the year, though, Tolkien found less and less time to write. World War II broke out in September of 1939, although it did not have the effect on him that World War I did. Due to the effects of the war, however, the publishing business was in a poor state. Paper was getting harder to come by, and due to the cost of the war, needs became more expensive. Furthermore, Tolkien was already taking longer than his publishers had hoped on completely another hobbit story. He

had written a substantial amount of the story, but it could not be considered complete in any case. In 1943, he reached another road block in the story, and again, the story was delayed.

One of the main reasons that much of his work was never finished was because that Tolkien wanted to perfect his work in all areas; he did not want any holes in his story. The problem was that this took considerable amounts of his time:

One cause of the difficulty was his perfectionism. Not content with writing a large and complex book, he felt he must ensure that every single detail fitted satisfactorily into the total pattern. Geography, chronology, and nomenclature all had to be entirely consistent. He had been give some assistance with the geography, for his son Christopher helped him by drawing an elaborate map of the terrain covered by the story. Tolkien himself had been marking rough sketch-maps since beginning work on the book; he once said: 'If you're going to have a complicated story you must work to a map; otherwise you'll never make a map of it afterwards.' But the map in itself was not enough, and he made endless calculations of time and distance, drawing up elaborate charts concerning events in the story, showing dates, the days of the week, the hours, and sometimes even the direction of the wind and the phase of the moon. This was partly his habitual insistence on perfection, partly sheer reveling in the fun of 'sub-creation', but most of all a concern to provide a totally convincing picture. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 198)

The visual aspect was the not the only part of the story that continued to occupy Tolkien's time.

Tolkien's love of language had not diminished over the years; indeed, his passion only seemed to grow stronger, particularly for his invented languages, which had expanded over the years:

Name-making also involved much of his attention, as was inevitable, for the invented languages from which the names were constructed were both the mainspring of his mythology and in themselves a central activity of his intellect. Once again, the elvish languages Quenya and Sindarin, now more sophisticated than they had been when he began *The Silmarillion* twenty-five years earlier, played a principal role in name-making, and were used in the composition of elvish poems and songs. The story also called for the invention of at least the rudiments of several other languages, and all this took time and energy. Moreover he had reached a point where the story divided into several independent and in themselves complicated chains of events, and while he believed that it would only take him two or three chapters to get Frodo and Sam Gamgee to Mordor he could not yet face unraveling the complexities of the simultaneous events in Gondor and Rohan. It had taken him nearly six years to bring the story this far; how could he ever find the time and energy to finish it, let alone to complete and revise *The Silmarillion*, which still clamoured for attention? He was fifty-one, tired, and fearful that in the end he would achieve nothing. He had already gained a reputation for almost indefinite procrastination in his philological work, and this sometimes amused him, though it was often saddening to him; but as to never finishing his mythology, that was a dreadful and numbing thought. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 199)

He was able to come up with a story, called *Leaf by Niggle*, which helped him to get back into the habit of writing *The Lord of the Rings* again: “The story [*Leaf by Niggle*] was not published for many months, but the actual business of writing it helped to exorcise some of Tolkien’s fear, and to get him to work again on *The Lord of the Rings*” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 200).

It was not until 1947 that Tolkien completed *The Lord of the Rings*. There had been more years of trying to perfect the story, and to get everything satisfactorily down on paper:

He revised, niggled, and corrected earlier chapters, spending so much time at it that his colleagues came to regard him as lost to philology. But the final full stop was something he could not yet achieve. During the summer of 1947 he drafted a revision to *The Hobbit* which would provide a more satisfactory explanation of Gollum’s attitude to the Ring; or rather, an explanation that fitted better with the sequel...In the following months *The Lord of the Rings* at least reached its conclusion. Tolkien recalled that he ‘actually wept’ when writing the account of the heroes’ welcome that is given to the hobbits on the Field of Cormallen. Long ago he had resolved to take the chief protagonists across the sea towards the West at the end of the book, and with the writing of the chapter that describes the setting sail from the Grey Havens the huge manuscript was nearly complete. Nearly but not quite. ‘I like tying up loose ends,’ Tolkien once said, and he wished to make sure that there were no loose ends in his great story. So he wrote an Epilogue in which Sam Gamgee told his children what happened to each of the principal characters who did not sail West. It ended with Sam listening to ‘the sigh and murmur of the Sea upon the shore of Middle-earth’. And that was the

end; but now Tolkien had to revise, again and again, until he was completely satisfied with the entire text, and this took many months. He once said of the book: "I don't suppose there are many sentences that have not been niggled over." Then he typed out a fair copy, balancing his typewriter on his attic bed because there was no room on his desk, and using two finger because he had never learned to type ten. Not until the autumn of 1949 was it all finished. (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 206-7)

Tolkien had spent twelve years altogether on writing the *Lord of the Rings* (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 211).

However, Tolkien would have wait until his work could actually be published. His main desire was that *The Silmarillion* would be published along with *The Lord of the Rings*, for he worked on it sufficiently enough that it could be published. However, not many companies, including Stanley Unwin's, could see the point in publishing *The Silmarillion*, and when Tolkien thought that he had found a company that would publish both, the deal fell through. Eventually though, Tolkien went back to his old company of Allen & Unwin, as he just wanted *The Lord of the Rings* to be published in some way, even if *The Silmarillion* was not. "Tolkien wrote in 1952: 'As for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, they are where they were. The one finished, the other still unfinished (or unrevised), and both gathering dust. I have rather modified my views. Better something than nothing! Although to me all are one, and *The Lord of the Rings* would be better far (and eased) as part of the whole, I would gladly consider the publication of any part of the stuff. Years are becoming precious. What about *The Lord of the Rings*? Can anything be done about that, to unlock gates I slammed myself?'" (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 216).

Rayner Unwin, the boy who had given the first report on *The Hobbit* years back, became Tolkien's helper in getting *The Lord of the Rings* published. As the manuscript was so enormous, it could not be published as one book. Rayner persuaded Tolkien to split his story into three separate volumes to make it easier to publish:

Tolkien managed to complete his final revision for what was to be the first volume of *The Lord of the Rings* by mid-April [of 1953], and he sent it to Allen & Unwin for typesetting to begin. Soon afterwards he delivered the text of the second volume. He had already discussed with Rayner Unwin the question of independent titles for the three volumes, which Unwin considered preferable to an overall title with volume numbers. Although the book was one continuous story and not a trilogy—a point that Tolkien was always concerned to emphasize—it was felt that it would be best if it appeared volume by volume under different titles, thus earning three sets of reviews rather than one, and perhaps disguising the sheer size of the book. Tolkien was never entirely happy about the division, and he insisted on retaining *The Lord of the Rings* as the overall title. But after a great deal of discussion he and Rayner eventually agreed upon *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King* for the volume titles.

(Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 220)

After sixteen years of writing the book, “the first volume of *The Lord of the Rings* was to be published in the summer of 1954” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 221). The second volume was published Mid-November of that same year, and it was not until the October of 1955 that *The Return of the King* landed in bookstores (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 223-25). Needless to say, the books gained a wide following in a short amount of time, and within

years, Allen & Unwin had sold the copyrights in order for the books to be translated into different languages, and “in the following years *The Lord of the Rings* was translated into all the major European languages, and many others” (Carpenter, J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography 228).

J.R.R. Tolkien died at the age of eighty-one on 2 September 1973. He never finished *The Silmarillion*, although he made arrangements so that his son, Christopher, would be able to finish the book should he not be able to. In the Foreward to *The Silmarillion*, Christopher Tolkien wrote:

The Silmarillion, now published four years after the death of its author, is an account of the Elder Days, or the First Age of the World. In *The Lord of the Rings* were narrated the great events at the end of the Third Age; but the tales of *The Silmarillion* are legends deriving from a much deeper past, when Morgoth, the first Dark Lord, dwelt in Middle-earth, and the High Elves made war upon him for the recovery of the Silmarils. Not only, however, does *The Silmarillion* relate the events of a far earlier than those of *The Lord of the Rings*; it is also, in all the essentials of its conception, far the earlier work. Indeed, although it was not then called *The Silmarillion*, it was already in being half a century ago; and in battered notebooks extending back to 1917 can still be read the earliest versions, often hastily penciled, of the central stories of the mythology. But it was never published (though some indication of its content could be gleaned from *The Lord of the Rings*), and throughout my father's long life he never abandoned it, nor ceased even in his last years to work on it...On my father's death it fell to me to try to bring the work into publishable form. It became clear to me that to attempt to present, within the covers of a single book, the diversity of the materials—to

show *The Silmarillion* as in truth a continuing and evolving creation extending over more than a half a century—would in fact lead only to confusion and the submerging of what is essential. I set myself therefore to work out a single text, selecting and arranging in such a way as seemed to me to produce the most coherent and internally self-consistent narrative” (Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* vii-viii).

Christopher understood just how important it was to his father to make sure that *The Silmarillion* would be published, and this was not the only thing that Christopher would continue. J.R.R. Tolkien left many journals of notes on his mythology, and Christopher took it upon himself to research and write books from these notes, a series which he called *The Tales of Middle-Earth*, which is still being continued today.

J.R.R. Tolkien set out to create what he called “a mythology for England,” and he did accomplish this. Although his books were considered fiction, they nonetheless became classics of literature, for the details they incorporate make them texts to be studied and learned. Out of the desire to study his invented languages, a group of “Tolkien linguistics” emerged, whose purpose was “to understand and describe Tolkien’s languages, and his writings in and about those languages, in their own terms and as they actually are: namely, a large collection of successive historical grammars, lexicons, essays, and compositions presenting Tolkien’s own linguistic views and descriptions of the long series of conceptually differing yet contiguous and, throughout, thematically unified languages he produced, each stage of which represents a unique and individual language (and internal language history) as worthy of study as any other stage; and yet each of which grew from, maintains, and exhibits a continuity of form, theme, and context with preceding stages that far outweighs the differences among them, and that,

considered in relation to the whole history of these conceptual shifts, and particularly when considered in chronological sequence, exhibits areas of both remarkable stability and remarkable dynamics within and across the various flavors of Tolkien's linguistic aesthetic, throughout his life" (Hostetter 24). There is still no decisive conclusion in these studies of how Tolkien's languages were actually designed and written; only Tolkien himself knew exactly how to define his languages. To this day, these languages are still being analyzed by different groups of scholars and critics.

Tolkien lived for his passion of languages, and this can be seen by the accounts of all that he did for the study of languages. He created an original mythology in order to give meaning to his invented languages. There is obviously much influence from other languages that he studied that can be found in his invented languages. As already shown, his admiration for the beauty and grace of the Finnish and Welsh languages helped him to form the Quenya and Sindarin elf languages respectively. These influences were adopted from a lifetime of continuous exposure to different languages, and Tolkien's life was defined by his experiences with these languages. *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, and *The Lord of the Rings* are the works of a man who was very passionate about what he studied and wrote about, and his passion can be felt in these creative works. Through his works, Tolkien continues to live and influence people with his passion for writing and language.

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